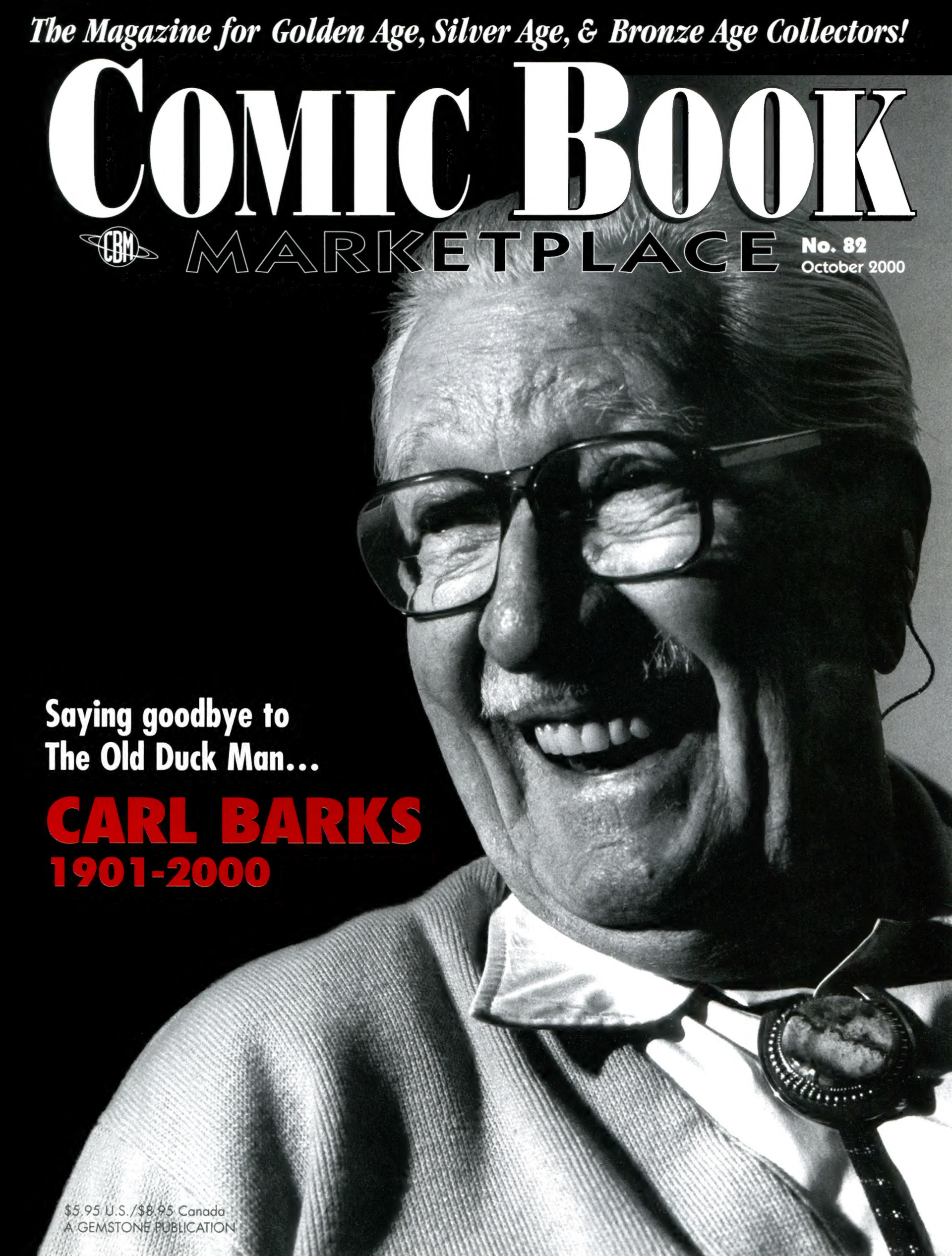
The Magazine for Golden Age, Silver Age, & Bronze Age Collectors!

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 82
October 2000



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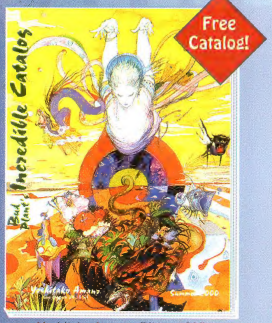

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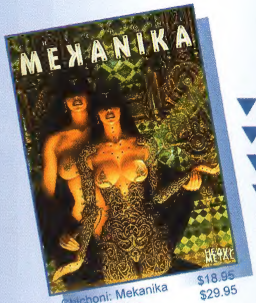

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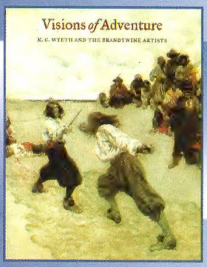

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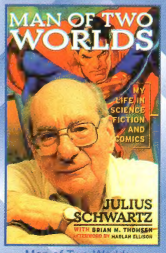

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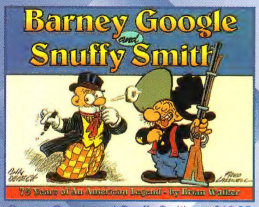

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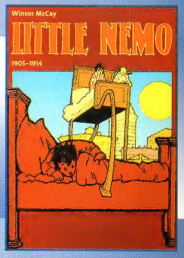

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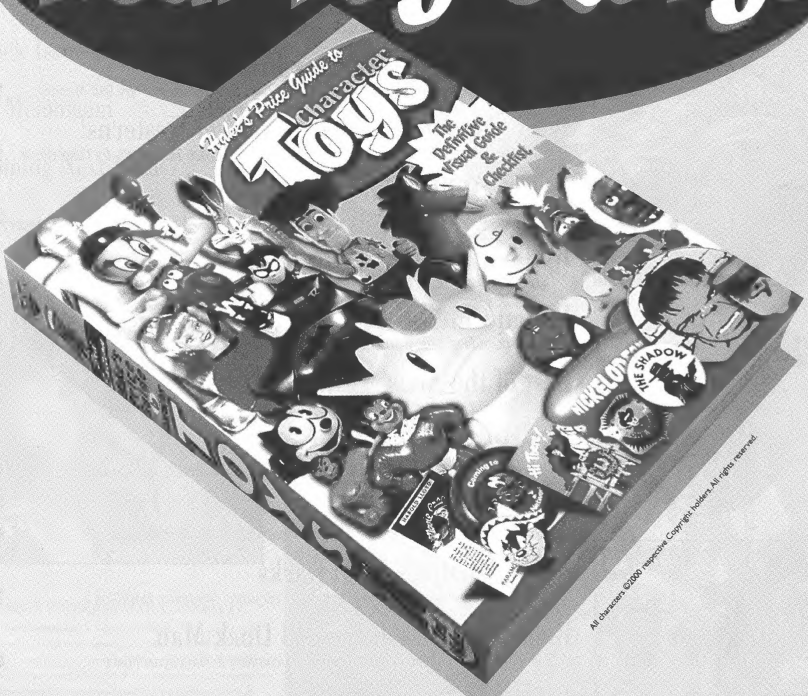

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ON THE COVER: A rare previously unpublished photo of the late Carl Barks taken by photo-journalist Ed Summer.
BELOW: The Terrible Totem goes after the Rawhide Kid from the cover of *Rawhide Kid* #22 (Jun 1961).

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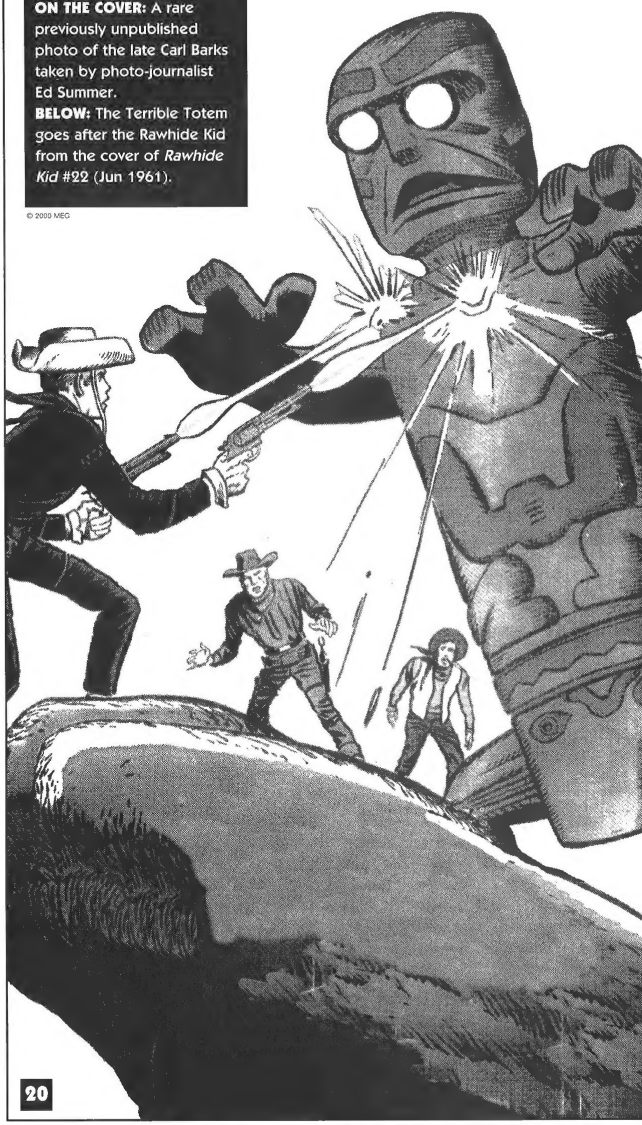

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Summer of the Ducks!

When school let out in early June of 1959 (at the end of 5th grade), my friends talked of their upcoming summer activities—camp, swimming lessons, bike riding, surfing at the beach, reunions, and family vacations. My thoughts, however, turned to math. I thought "there are only 18,000 people in my town, probably less than a thousand houses or so. I'll just bet I could knock on every door in Coronado in a single summer—and ask each person for old comic books." I just knew there was a treasure trove hiding somewhere in my town, and if I was thorough and didn't give up, I had confidence the treasure could be mine.

Red Radio Flyer wagon in tow, I began my quest. Then after 4½ weeks of dismal results, I finally hit pay dirt. Knock. Knock. Knock. The door to the stately Victorian two-story opened. "Hi—do you have any old comics you don't want anymore?" I brazenly asked. An impeccably dressed elderly lady with white hair and a cane replied "I sure do, young man—up in my attic. Like to see them? They used to belong to my children but now I keep them for the grandkids—but now even my grandchildren are getting too old for them. You can have them, young man—if you can cart them away."

My heart stopped. I bounded up two flights of closely spaced stairs to a musty and acrid-smelling attic. There along one side of the amazingly uncluttered space were 20 stacks, each about two feet tall. Although I was elated to find *Superman* #67, *Sensation* #94, *World's Finest* #51, and *All-Star* #55 (the first hint of the Golden Age I'd ever seen), I was disheartened to discover that that was the end of the DC inventory. Almost everything else was Dell—including a huge assortment of thick Dell 25¢ "funny" books! Woody Woodpecker, Little Lulu, Tom & Jerry, Bugs Bunny—and bazillions of Walt Disney Duck and mouse annuals.

Even though these "funny" books weren't exactly the focus of my pilgrimage, I sincerely thanked my elderly benefactor and spent the day carting the trove home—one wagon load at a time. I spent the rest of the summer reading with a thick Dell 25-center in one hand and a popsicle in the other—endowed with that rarest of childhood feelings—a confidence that my new pile of comics was virtually bottomless and would somehow last forever.

In spite of my predisposed prejudice against "funny" funny books, I really got into those Dell annuals—especially those featuring Uncle Scrooge, Donald and his nephews, Gyro, Gladstone, Daisy, and Grandma. Even the size and weight of those Dell annuals instilled a kind of confidence. They were sooooo big! While reading, I began to notice there was something special about most of the Duck stories. The adventures were fantastically entertaining and the art seemed—well—more "duck-like."

My family came and went—I stayed home and read. My friends chided me to come out and play—I stayed in and read. Usually seductive TV shows echoed from the living room—I shut the door and read. I read like there was no tomorrow. I didn't realize at the time, but I was under the spell of truly great and timeless literature and the wonderful memories of that magical "Summer of the Ducks" are still with me today.

Years passed and fandom started. Soon there were conventions and price guides and scholarly articles on comic book history. I eventually found out who 'the Good Duck artist' was—an almost-unknown Carl Barks. Since then, I've come to realize what an incredible debt we all owe to the memory of this kindly, unassuming, and brilliant creator. If you don't believe me, grab a stack-o-ducks and a popsicle and let yourself fall into the magic Carl Barks. You won't be sorry—and you just may rediscover why you came to love comics in the first place.

And its not too late to go door to door, either. You'll need to bring your wagon though... just in case!

Gary

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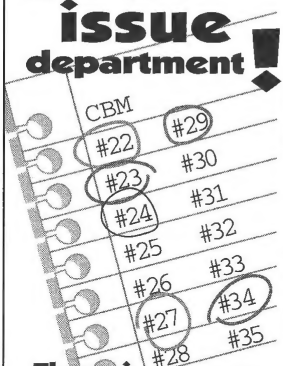

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Sleep well, Uncle Carl...

On the 24th of August of 2000, Carl Barks fell asleep. And he started to dream.

In his dream, he found himself in Old California, in the hall of a mid-19th Century hacienda. A big celebration was going on, an incredible fiesta. Carl thought "A fancy-dress party, maybe?"

But soon he realized that he knew most of the people he met: friends from his childhood in Oregon, fellow workers in all of the trades he had tried throughout his life... riveters, cartoon animators, scriptwriters, comic book editors... long forgotten neighbors and acquaintances... and, mixed in the crowd, Carl spotted many dog-nosed, pig-faced, duck-billed people—and it all seemed perfectly normal to him.

Everybody looked at him and smiled, as if he were the guest of honor of the party. And he entered a huge room, where a long table had been set for a luxurious dinner. And sitting at the table were all his relatives, from his grandparents to his great-great-grandsons, and all the people he had most loved throughout the years, and amongst them he saw also the familiar figures of Gladstone, Gyro Gearloose, the Beagle Boys, the Junior Woodchucks... and he caught a fascinating, Sofia Loren-like Magica de Spell winking at him.

And a pig-faced Mayor led Carl to the place of honor, where two seats were still vacant. Carl asked the Mayor, "Are all of these people celebrating for ME?" And the Mayor smiled and said, "Oh, you've seen nothing yet... just take a look out of the window!" And in an endless patio Carl saw millions and millions of people from all over the world, children and grown-ups, all cheering at him and waving well-read copies of his comic books... and he also saw Donald and the kids, dancing a dance of celebration....

Awestruck, Carl asked, "But who is going to pay for this unbelievable feast?"

The Mayor replied, "Oh, money is not a problem for our host... he has a few cubic acres to spare, you should know..."

Scrooge McDuck entered the room, went to sit next to Carl, and said to him, "After this little banquet is over, I'm leaving with Donald and the kids for a long, long trip around the world... I'm planning to visit all my industries on the five continents, and also go back to the places where we lived our adventures, and—of course—look for other things to see, other adventures to live. I'm looking for a guy to write the travel journal, and I hear you're quite good at such stuff... Would you like to join us? I can pay you 30¢ per hour, nothing more, but you have an eternity of hours in front of you..."

Carl Barks smiled, shook hands with the old duck, and the crowd cheered. At a quarter past midnight, on August 25th, 2000, the dream continued on.

Sleep well, Uncle Carl...

Armando Botto, Italy

Big fan of Carl Barks

I am a big fan of Carl Barks. Like thousands of his fans everywhere, I was very sorry to hear about his death. I knew that he was pretty sick. I hoped he would live to be 120. 99 years was not enough. I am sure you will be publishing an issue devoted to Carl Barks in the near future. I can not tell you how much I enjoy your magazine. With all of the technology that is available today, there is nothing like being able to read a mint condition 25$ Dell Giant.

Brian Gardner, Indiana

Johnny Craig writes

A few days ago I received a complimentary copy of your magazine and I first must thank you for the gift and second, I must compliment you on the entire contents of the issue.

It is probably the finest tribute to EC that I have come across and I am amazed at how much I learned about those publishing days so long ago and how little I knew of the lives of the people I worked with. With all the artists busy at home, the EC offices were, at best, a haphazard meeting place and though I spent most of my early time there when an artist did arrive the meeting was always jovial, sometimes even boisterously friendly, but *(Continued on page 10)*

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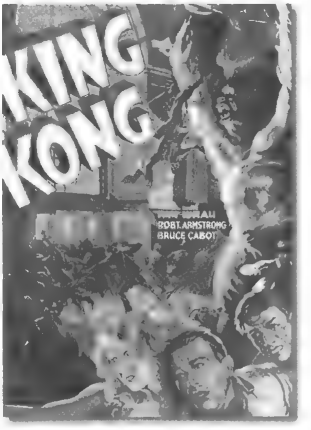

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usually rather brief. Everyone enjoyed the camaraderie but everyone, even the visiting artist, had to get back to work.

Your magazine warmed my memories and I thoroughly enjoyed every page. The Ingles coverage was wonderful and the reproductions of his works a real treat. I am pleased, also, with the overall quality of printing. As a former ad agency art director I know how difficult it can be to produce a quality print job. You certainly have and you deserve all the credit.

This issue will be a time-worn treasure for me and my family to enjoy for all the years ahead. I am grateful and I do thank you deeply.

Johnny Craig, Pennsylvania

Restored vs. unrestored

To start with, I want to say that I have been very impressed with the quality of CBM. I just started my subscription a few months ago and I am very glad that I did.

I wanted to discuss the effect that I feel CGC is having on the market today. To start with, I think it will significantly increase the spread between the Good and the NM prices in the Overstreet Price Guide. If the current trends continue, most if not all CGC books graded NM and above will be going for multiples of Guide. This was seen in Greg Manning's auctions where everything I even thought about bidding on was untouchable. I understand that there were two 'coin guys' who were buying up all the CGC graded books at the auction, but I stop and think if the huge investment they made a few months ago will hold up in the future.

As with PSA grading in sports cards, the CGC fad may die down in the next few years. I feel that because it is new to the comic world, that it is very hot right now (as is what happens with many new titles such as Witchblade and Danger Girl).

Another subject I want to touch upon is restoration. In the last few years, it's been obvious in big auctions such as Sotheby's that restored comics have not been going for nearly as much as unrestored copies in lesser grades. An example is in the recent Sotheby's auction that a restored FN- Action #1 went for over $30,000 less than a Good/Very Good unrestored. It's good to know that restored books are not being valued as much as they were a few years ago.

The last topic I want to touch upon is dealers and the way they treat their customers. There have been very few dealers I have dealt with who have graded well. I have had a few very bad experiences with a certain dealer on the East Coast (whose name will not be mentioned). After returning a few books because they were very poorly described (a book with every wrap split at the spine due to brittleness was a 'Good' to them and was a defect missed when described over the phone), the dealer started to bid against me on every item, comic or non-comic, I was bidding on on eBay. I mean really, is this really professionalism? I think dealers need to buck up in today's market and realize that not everyone is going to spend $10k with them every time they call, and learn to have respect for those of us who buy on a budget.

Ankur Jetley, New Jersey

(Continued on page 12)

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IN MEMORIAM

Carl Barks, the Old Duck Man

March 27, 1901–August 25, 2000
99 + years; 36,311 days

Carl Barks died peacefully in his home shortly after midnight (estimated at 12:15 am) on Friday August 25, 2000.

Primary caregivers Helen and Serene Hunicke and others took shifts to be awake in his presence 24 hours a day for eight days after what he had announced the Friday before as his "farewell lunch," when he stopped taking nourishment. Life prolonging medications having ceased some time earlier.

Carl lapsed into a deep sleep, breathing steadily without apparent discomfort earlier in the evening. Serene Hunicke was reading by a low, lit lamp near his bedside looking at him every few minutes when suddenly she noticed no movement. She and sister Helen checked his breathing and pulse to confirm what they knew: Carl Barks' year-long battle with leukemia had finally come to an end.

The legendary Duck Man, son of a Southern Oregon wheat farmer, returned in 1988 to the region of his youth. He was born in 1901 in the small town of Merrill, south of Klamath Falls.

After a stint in Minneapolis working for the *Calgary Eye Opener*, he moved to California in 1935 to join Walt Disney's animation studio, where he quickly was installed in the Duck Unit as a story man, his swift drawing style and quick wit earning him the respect of Disney and his peers.

In 1942, "the chance of a lifetime" came to Barks when he and fellow animator Jack Hannah got the assignment to illustrate *Donald Duck Finds Pirate Gold*, the first full-length Donald comic book, Dell *Four Color* #9. Following that successful opportunity, Barks went to work for Western Publishing, where he wrote and/or drew over 500 Duck Family stories in almost total anonymity until his retirement in 1966.

A new and more varied second career began for Barks in 1971, when he got permission from Disney to do paintings for fans. From '72 to '76 he turned out a prodigious volume of art work, 122 oils that were reprinted in a collection by Another Rainbow in 1981 called, *The Fine Art of Walt Disney's Donald Duck by Carl Barks*. Other successes followed, including an uninterrupted run of licensed Disney lithographs that began the following year and continues to this day. In the interim, he designed or approved production of his images recreated in porcelain, bronze and other formats. Barks' last official project involved signing lithographs for a new series of non-Disney—but duck-like—characters of his own design painted in watercolors in the late 1970s.

Disney chief Michael Eisner bestowed the prestigious Disney Legends award on Barks in ceremony a few years ago. His handprints and signature were also set in concrete at the Disney Studio.

Barks moved to Grants Pass, Oregon from Southern California in 1985 with his late wife, Margaret, who died on March 10, 1993. The Old Duck Man, as he is remembered by millions of fans worldwide, is survived by a daughter, Dorothy Gibson, of Bremerton, Washington, four grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and eight great-great-grandchildren. Memorial services were held at 4pm, Thursday, August 31 at Lundberg's I.B. Hall Funeral Home in Grants Pass. Family, friends and collectors from throughout the United State were in attendance. — **Bruce Hamilton**

Ronald McDonald comic

Your magazine is absolutely the most informative and comprehensive publication of comic book collecting. CBM gives those of us in the hobby that are collectors and readers new insights every month into comics which we may or may not collect. You bring to light new comics, artists, and/or new facts about the hobby each and every month.

You and your editorial staff should be recognized as, and are, historians in our hobby and your CBM will be the reference guide for future generations of collectors. You should consider binding tomes or volume works for CBM just like Masterworks does. I personally would purchase every one you publish even though I subscribe to the magazine. I would love to be able to refer to a reference volume when looking for one of your articles or when looking up the story behind a book and/or artist's work behind it. You have covered enough books and/or artists to date to have a comprehensive reference history.

I have a question your readers may be able to answer… I recently purchased a Ronald McDonald comic #2, dated November 1970, which is a "special reprint edition" and says "not for sale" on cover. Overstreet lists a V2#3-special reprint for McDonal systems, "not for sale" on comic cover," but not for #2. Did Overstreet mean to list V2#2, or is there a #3 special reprint and they were not aware of #2 special reprint? Anyway, #2 does indeed have a special reprint.

Nick Katradis, New Jersey

Schomburg shakeup

Enjoy Comic Book Marketplace very much. I am a big fan of Alex Schomburg's and enjoyed reading your previously published articles about his early work. I have found a lot of great work that he has done such as illustrations for comics, puzzles, books, Radiocraft and Science Fiction magazines. I always enjoy his crowded covers and complicated action figures.

However, I am disturbed by the statement that the cover from the Electrical Experimenter December 1926 was his first cover. I have a copy of the November 1925 Electrical Experimenter which also has a cover done by Schomburg. My copy may not be the first Schomburg cover but the one that is shown in your Special Edition #4 must be incorrect.

I have shown this cover to one of your market advisors, Tom Gordon, who can vouch for its authenticity. Best wishes in your future endeavors.

Bruce Mason,via E-mail

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Gaffs in my article

Loved the cover to CBM #81. Doctor Strange #169 has one of my favorite images of the good Doctor. I wanted to clarify a few "gaffs" in my article "That Old Black Magic…"

1) I referred to "Paste Pot Pete" as having ties to a Fighting American "Milieu," M-I-L-I-E-U, as in "type," not "Miller" as in grinding "super" flour for "super" bread. 2) The "Mindless Ones" (Gore supporters) in the Dark Realm have "Gort" beams coming out of their heads, as in Klatuvarada-Nicktoschmickto Gort, not "Jort," which as we all know is the Ancient One's favorite soda-pop. 3) Lastly, the definitive villain for Dr. Strange is "Dormannu," not Dormammes"—which is actually the family name… yeah, …as in "the Nelsons"— "The Dormamames!… Dormozzie, Dormarriet, Dormauid, Dormicky, and Dormammu!"

My best to the cast and crew!

Stephen H. Gentner

Fight Against Crime #7 quest

As you'll probably recall, I was very thrilled to speak with you via phone recently; Having been a bit of a comic-recluse most of my life, reading any and all comic-related publications, I've always admired your most-helpful ideas, thrilling discoveries (ie: All American #12 vs. 125, etc!) and the countless tidbits of other invaluable information, as well as my having been a die-hard CBM fan since that first thin unimpressive issue!

Well, when the crucial Gerber books first came out, I quickly noticed the white-space for Fight Against Crime #7. Already being a fan of the title, I set out on a quest for that issue. I eventually came to find a copy, (and cheap!) and, well, here's where my foolishness becomes evident… Over the years, I've watched for any other copies to hit the market, in both the assorted dealers catalogs, flyers, conventions, auctions, CBG, and more recently, eBay and other websites. I never have seen one offered anywhere, amazingly.

When you made your summons in CBM #76, I was filled with excitement, as I recalled having filled that one in years ago! I eagerly ran to my pre-Code Crime collection, only to find a vacancy. I then proceeded to search through my Horror collection, as this title is laden with horrific slogans and imagery, and goes well in any horror collection too! To my utter dismay, still no book… I resolved to dig through the little piles I

seem to accumulate (books that haven't been chronicled for my records, books that haven't been converted to the archival products, books that haven't been checked for cool undiscovered drug stories, or werewolf, Hitler, or decapitation, or, well, you get the idea!)

In any case, over the last few months I about drove myself "to the grave" trying to find this now mirage-like Fight Against Crime #7! Was it all just a dream? Was it missing a page, and been hastily sold it off years back and the transaction since forgotten? Or worse, theft or loss, or, shudder, some new, never-before-diagnosed, over-collecting comic-psychosis?

Well, I was just digging through my ever-growing collection of pre-code drug propaganda books tonight, and noticed a couple of books stuck together (a price tag was left on one Mylar), and, upon separation, re-discovered my "lost" copy of Fight Against Crime #7!

And, to my growing jubilation, it all came back to me: The violent Hollingsworth lead story with plenty of skull/death imagery, brilliant colors and gloss, the creamy white pages (even at the edges), and, much more importantly, the wild tale of the ever-criminal "Franklin Richey," who was "caught passing dope," and he really gets his brutal payoff for "passing heroin to children"! (Exact quotes accurate and fully intended!)

This great "true crime" story, titled "Foul Play," is signed by an artist named "Fleishman," who is quite competent, but not particularly memorable. It's got the "trademark" story comics covers (May 1952) with the skull and the dug-up corpse's ghastly purplish-grey hue and blank gaze, as the cops approach through the graveyard with guns blazing! It has a white strip up the spine from the printing process, not from "human rolling" during the prior readings; and there's a few minor edge/corner flaws, but nothing major.

Another previously unknown drug issue, by a publisher who seems to have steered clear of the likely controversial drug themes, is Jumbo #101, from June of '47. (ZX-5 story by "Major Thorpe"). In a double whammy of non-PC themes, the detective actually paints his face to look like a black member of the stage-show, (why are the lips so big?!) to crack the "Reefer racket"! Do you know of any other Fiction House drug books? And, while we're on that subject, do you know if Blue *(Continued on page 78)*

IN MEMORIAM

Unca Carl will be missed!

By Michael Naiman

The art of storytelling has its origins at the dawn of man. The ability to weave a tale of excitement and adventure is a craft that was to be passed down from generation to generation. Sadly, we must now say goodbye to one of the most enduring and beloved storytellers of the 20th Century. Carl Barks, universally recognized as the "Good Duck Artist," passed away on August 25th at the age of 99. His lifetime spanned the length of the 20th Century. He lived during a time of mankind's greatest accomplishments as well as their most heinous behaviors. To list his honors—as to list his stories and accomplishments—would be excessive. Let it simply be noted that Carl Barks was the most famous, most honored, and most widely read comic book creator. There was a time when his stories in *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* sold five million copies a month!

There are those in the industry who knew Carl Barks far longer and on a more personal level than I. They could analyze his interests, write scholarly treatments about his work, and examine the underlying motives and critique his artwork. Perhaps all that can be written about him has been written.

Carl was an unassuming, self educated man. He worked at many jobs—logger, feedlot employee, railroad worker, chicken rancher, and artist. But, he'll always be remembered for his storytelling abilities. Whether it was a one-page gag story, a ten-page WDC&S story involving Donald and another of his get-rich-quick schemes, or an Uncle Scrooge adventure from long ago and far away—you always knew that it would be well crafted and entertaining. Carl's Ducks were, in their own way, more "human" than their superhero competitors.

Between 1942 and 1966, Carl wrote and illustrated nearly 500 comic book stories. All of these have been continuously in print and read worldwide for nearly six decades. Following his retirement, Carl took up the paint brush and produced over 150 oil paintings. This was a man who could not be idle. He always wanted to know what was new in the industry, where corporate comicdom was going, and always had a keen interest in current world affairs.

For those of you who grew up in the 50s and early 60s, was there ever a place where you couldn't find a Disney comic book? The barber shop, the dentist's office, and on special rainy day situations, even in the classroom! Chances are these comics contained a Barks story. You might not have known his name, but you recognized his stories. They were somehow different. They had a look and energy that was distinctive. Carl truly was "the good duck artist" as he was so often referred to.

There is an immense sense of loss in his passing that is difficult to describe. This is one of those life milestones that comes along to mark your own mortality. I can remember when I was 13 years old and the national trauma of JFK's assassination, at age 18 there were the murders of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy, at age 30 John Lennon's slaying, and now at age 50, another one of my childhood's touchstones has departed. Part of one's life-cycle certainly . . . recognizing it and dealing with it is another matter entirely. But we do. We have to. It's part of being an adult.

Yet, it is the Peter Pan in all of us that has been diminished just by knowing that The Old Duck Man isn't there anymore. Unca Carl will be missed. While his work will certainly live as long as people read, it will now be up to us to spread his comic Gospel. We are the new storytellers and I feel honored to have his library of creativity to draw upon and to pass down to future generations.

PALO ALTO COLLECTION A SMASH!

Here are some highlights from our recent ebay auction
Look for our next big comics and art auction in 2001

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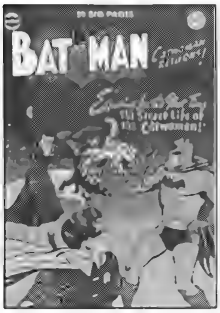
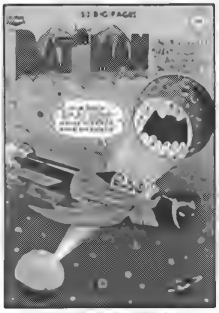


BATMAN 62 CGC 9.2
$3,610



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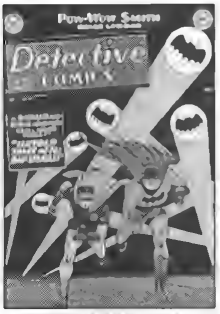
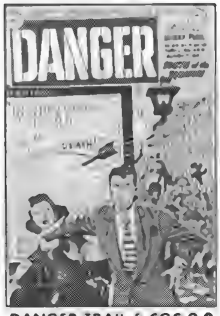
$2,225



DETECTIVE 164 CGC 9.2
$1,932

MARVEL TALES 99 CGC 9.2
$1,225

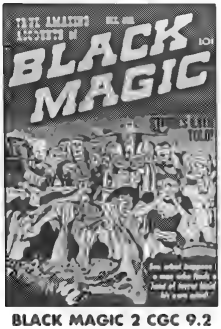
WORLD'S FINEST 48 FINE
$1,001



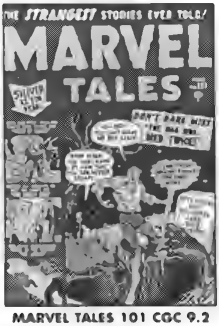
DANGER TRAIL 5 CGC 9.2
$998

ACTION 151 CGC 9.0
$946

EERIE V2#1 CGC 8.0
$920



BLACK MAGIC 2 CGC 9.2
$890



MARVEL TALES 101 CGC 9.2
$890

BOB HOPE 9 CGC 9.2
$879

ACTION 150 NM
$873

Animal, Vegetable, Mineral

Three Dell Zane Gray adaptations

By Pat S. Calhoun

Zane Grey was born in 1872 and spent his boyhood listening to the old folks talk about settling the Ohio Valley, the "first West," and their, tales sparked his interest in learning and writing about the pioneers of the Western migration. Grey hit his stride with the serial publication of *Heritage of the Desert* in *Popular Magazine*, one of the many fiction pulps of the era, beginning with the June 15, 1910 issue. This novel was followed by *Riders of the Purple Sage* in 1912 and *Desert Gold* in 1913. Grey continued to produce well-received novels at a steady pace all through the teens, twenties, and thirties, until his career was cut short by a fatal heart attack in 1939, leaving him as "the best-selling Western author of all time."

During the early 1950s when the Western genre claimed a good part of the huge comic book market, Dell translated a number of his books into what they called "Picturized Editions." And while these were similar to the other treatments Dell published of novels, movies, and TV shows (of which many were excellent and most entertaining) the Grey comics were the only ones to use that apt description.

Tappan's Burro (*Four Color* #449 February 1953) is a masterpiece, a deceptively simple tale of the abiding love between the wandering prospector Tappan, and Jenet, his faithful burro. First the animal drags him to safety after he's swooned crossing burning desert sands. Then (just after they've mined a rich strike) Tappan gets mixed up with some greedy folk including a woman who pretends to like him while waiting for a chance to steal the gold. After the crime Tappan loses touch with his burro while tracking the thieves.

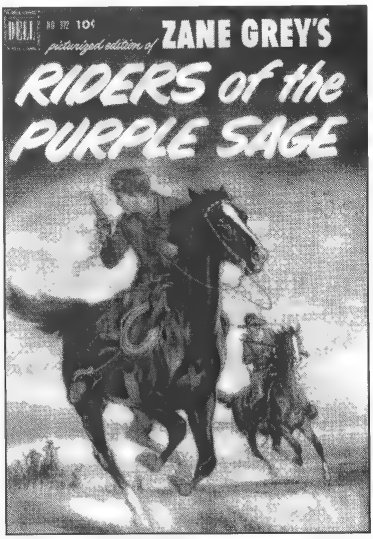
But he comes back the next year and finds her, and they have a idyllic—if unprofitable—season together, and the book ends with the burro and the human helping each other make a perilous mountain journey through a snowbound pass. This one's a 34-page novel, with the back covers carrying the last two pages.

Riders of the Purple Sage (*Four Color* #372 February 1952) is the monumental 1912 melodrama that cemented Grey's reputation. The story takes place in Utah where powerful ruthless ranch owners and cattlemen will stop at nothing to increase their holdings. Jane Witherspoon is a small independent rancher, and Bern Venters, though only recently hired as cowboy has proved trustworthy: their friendship annoys her neighbors who are aiming to drive her away by breaking her spirit or forcing her to marry the repulsive Tull, who is about to horsewhip Venters as the story begins.

A black-garbed rider materializes and interrupts the proceedings, and the mysterious stranger—who also bears a long-standing grudge against some of the local barons—comes to see that rescuing Jane and Bern from the overwhelming forces allied against them might also fulfill his need for vengeance. And Jane finds herself more and more attracted to the man in black—obsessed by his vow to find his sister's killer. Grey has plotted things to perfection, and there are stampedes and gunfights and tests of loyalty aplenty on the way to a suspenseful, superbly staged, and satisfying conclusion. The inside art on this one is pretty good, and the painted cover is a beauty. The story runs 32 pages, with the back covers devoting themselves to that classic cowboy song "The Old Chisolm Trail."

Desert Gold (*Four Color* #467 May 1953) features a fabulous painted cover: a dynamic portrait of imminent death as a knife-wielding Indian silently approaches his victim. This was the first comic book work by Don Spaulding who went on to paint a number of Western covers for Dell—mostly on Lone Ranger, Tonto, and Buck Jones. The story is another tale of powerful ranchers pushing out their smaller neighbors. This time—in Arizona—the land-grabber teams up with a Mexican bandito to drive out the man who runs a small border patrol of four rangers.

The rangers, with the invaluable aid of a Yaqui Indian, fight a long bloody battle against the bandit gang. The cover scene is "Yaqui" about to take



An action-packed cover and an action-packed story—After 88 years, Riders of the Purple Sage (Four Color #372 Feb 1952) is still the ultimate cowboy novel, expertly adapted & packaged by Dell.

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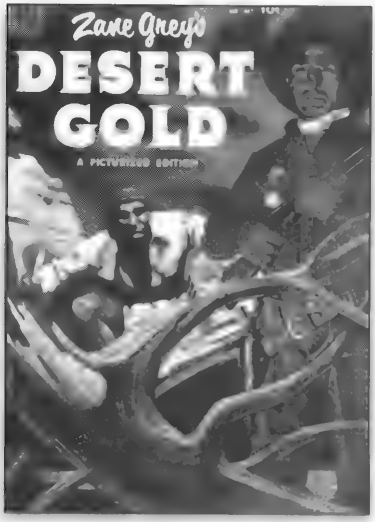
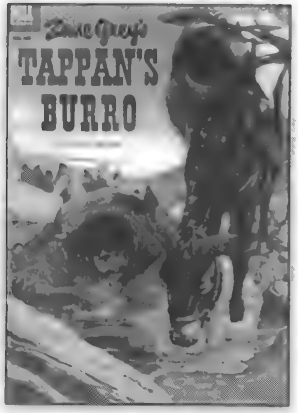
out a bandit guard. (Inside, the guard is a Mexican—as are all of Rojas' Raiders.) The text box for the following panel puts it thusly—perhaps in Grey's words: "The bandit guarding the ford has no warning—till he feels cold pain in his heart..." They finally defeat the raiders and return to find that their rich adversary has dynamited the spring that serves as water source for their boss' land... But Yaqui's knowledge of the territory once again saves the day... And Grey has neatly dovetailed in a romance between one of the rangers and the boss' daughter, adding its richness to a mix that makes a compelling and memorable read. This one has exciting art, and with Dell's unbeatable format (another 34-pager!) the result is an impressive comic.

These graphic novels hold up well to rereadings: the characters are distinct, the action is fast and motivated, and the landscapes are immense and integral to the stories. They are some of the most affordable comics of the early 1950s and among the most enjoyable—a winning combo. Readers who have never been attracted to the Western genre might consider trying a Dell Zane Grey adaptation. They may well be drawn to the narrative drive and colorful dramas that the books offer.





Tappan's Burro (Four Color #449, Feb 1953) sports a simple cover and contains a simple story adapted from a 1913 novel. Its clean old-fashioned art add up to a classic heartwarming tale of the old West.

Besides the brilliant story inside, Desert Gold (Four Color #467, May 1953) features a wonderful painted cover by Don Spaulding... his first comic work. He followed it with an incredible string of *Lone Ranger, Tonto,* and *Buck Jones* covers.

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COMING NEXT MONTH IN CBM

More than 1950's Paperbacks

The unsung leader in the romance field

By Michelle Nolan

Take a guess: What company was No. 3 at playing the love field during the period of the nation's greatest infatuation with romance comics?

You know that Marvel, through sheer volume, was No. 1 during those halcyon days of untold thousands of four-color kisses and caresses in 1949-56. You know that Quality, which was recently profiled in this space, was No. 2 by the time that wonderful company sold out to DC at the end of the 1956.

I'll bet you can't guess No. 3.

Ace. That's right, Ace!

The company, which was famous for action-filled pulp magazines in the 1930s and '40s and for its innovative paperback "double novels" in the 1950s, also was a leading player in the field of romance comics.

Ace began publishing romance comics in 1949, two years after Simon & Kirby pioneered the genre for Crestwood. Ace published 278 issues loaded with love by the time the company, which had roots solidly set in Golden Age superheroes, forsook comics at the end of 1956. Unlike Quality, though, Ace did not sell its comic book rights to anyone else.

For the purists among us, it should be noted that Fawcett, with 235 romance comics published from 1948-53, was No. 2 behind Marvel by the time Fawcett gave up publishing comics with its last few issues dated January 1954.

However, the heaviest period of romance publishing extended through 1956, so we're giving Ace the No. 3 distinction through that entire eight-year period.

In fact, no other major comic company in the 1950s devoted more than half of its press space to romance issues. After putting out 25 love comics in 1949, Ace published a whopping 253 romance issues in the 1950-56 period—as contrasted to only 181 issues of all other types of comics—as revealed through a thorough issue-by-issue research of Ace's publishing history by comics historian Dan Stevenson.

In fact, believe it or not, Ace published 27 romance comics in 1956 but only three non-romance types. Want to win a bet? They were *Penalty* #48 (the last issue of a crime title) and *Heroes of the Wild Frontier* #27 and #2 (published to take advantage of the Davy Crockett craze), all early in 1956.

It's thus intriguing to note that Ace, apparently, felt romance comics would sell better than any others in the immediate post-Comics Code era, possibly because they outsold Ace's other titles before the Comics Code. Quality, which published 62 romance comics in 1956, distributed 69 issues of other genres that year.

Did this heavy emphasis on romance contribute to the comic book demise of both Ace and Quality? Probably not, but just wondering.

Ace is not considered one of the more collectible companies in the field of romance comics, but any romance collector should have a few Aces up his or her sleeve. As romance comics go, it's not especially difficult to find representative examples, although I feel the 1956 issues are the toughest to find. I have found 189 of the 278 Ace romance comics, or more than two thirds of them, including 18 of the 27 issues published in 1956.

Unlike many other Atom Age companies, which began to stress teen humor titles in the late 1940s, Ace quickly gave up on that genre in favor or romance along with crime and horror/fantasy titles.

Thus, in the first half of 1949, *Dotty* became *Glamorous Romances* with #41, *Hap Hazard* evolved into *Real Love* with #25, and *Ernie* turned into *All Love* with #26. In the second half of 1949, Ace started six other romance titles—*Real Life Secrets*, *Revealing Romances*, *All Romances*, *Love at First Sight*, *Love Experiences*, and *Western Love Trails*. All six titles began with #1 except the short-lived *Western Love Trails*, which took over the *Western Adventures* title with #7.

Like so many other Atom Age publishers, Ace fell victim to the industry-wide "Love Glut" in

Another classic painted cover adorned All Romances #5 (Apr 1950) and was probably "lifted" from the Ace pulp library. This title was soon a victim of the "Love Glut" of 1950.

1950 and six of the nine Ace romance titles were either discontinued or converted to other genres by August of that eventful year. That left *Real Love, Glamorous Romances,* and *Love at First Sight* still on the stands, although *Love Experiences* resumed with #6 (April 1951)—10 months after it was temporarily discontinued.

Ace also used line-drawn covers like the one on the first issue of Glamorous Romances (#42 Sept 1949, formerly Dotty).

By the way, one of my favorite ironic title changes occurred when *Love Experiences* #5 (June 1950) became the classic horror one-shot title *Challenge of the Unknown* #6 (September 1950). This is one of the little gems in the entire horror comics field, with the stories "Villa of the Vampire" and "High Priestess of the Snake People" along with a cool zombie cover (*Web of Mystery* #19 reprinted this issue three years later).

One of the odder house ads in all of comics history is on the inside back cover of the only issue of *Challenge of the Unknown*. This ad pictures eight of the Ace romance titles (all but *Western Love Trails*), including not only *Love Experiences* (!) but four other titles that already had been discontinued one to four months before the September date of *Challenge of the Unknown*!

In other words, this house ad in *Challenge of the Unknown*—also used in Ace romance titles earlier in 1950—was actually encouraging readers to find and buy five "ghost" romance titles, so to speak. Not to mention the title that *Challenge of the Unknown* briefly replaced! Weird, eh? Sometimes I really wonder how competent some of the editors of old comics really were!

The obvious answer, of course, it that the cover ads were planned but not changed even though the genre of the comic changed. Even so, to see a full-page house ad for romance comics in a full-fledged horror title is a jarring example of mismarketing!

The story of *Love Experiences* #5/*Challenge of the Unknown* #6/*Love Experiences* #6 also is one of the stranger examples of Fifties finagling with the postal mailing permit process. It is true, however, that the second incarnation of *Love Experiences*, in theory anyway, could have continued from *Real Secrets*, which ended with #5.

Speaking of oddities, one of the stranger Atom Age comics is *Dotty* #40 (May 1949), which has a "serious" romance cover along with the overline "Glamorous Romances" over a huge Dotty logo. There were two Dotty stories (more or less played straight instead of for laughs) along with two romance stories. The title changed to *Glamorous Romances* with #41, with one such Dotty story, and she was gone by #42.

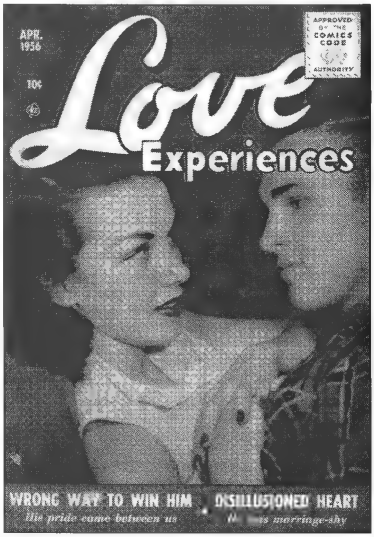
Likewise, *All Love* #26 had one Ernie story and one Lily Belle tale, plus two romance stories, before those two teenagers were banished for good from the Ace romance line. Obviously, Ace's editors did not want to waste any previously prepared stories.

Interestingly, *Real Love* #25 (April 1949… Ace's first romance comic published at a time when the romance flood had not quite begun in earnest) had no teen characters. *Real Love* #25, however, did contain an ownership statement for *Hap Hazard Comics*! Needless to say, when the publishers decided to jump on the romance bandwagon, they leaped before they looked!

Al Hartley drew a signed story in *Real Love* #25 and L.B. Cole had one in *All-Love* #27 (July 1949). Sam Cooper, who was with MLJ in the early 1940s, drew several early Ace romance stories.

The art credits for Ace aren't too well-known except to experts such as Hames Ware and Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr. If you leaf through the titles, though, you'll see stories by the likes of Ann Brewster. The vast majority of the stories were unsigned, and many of them were reprinted in the 1953-56 issues. Most of the art is at least competent, with a professional gloss similar to DC, Quality, and Marvel comics of the period.

What appeals most about Ace to many collectors is a series of strikingly beautiful painted covers used on some—but not all—issues in 1949-52. As far as I know, all the painted covers



Love Experiences #37 (Apr 1956) features a photo cover… it's third cover style in eight years of publishing romance comics. These 1956 issues are quite scarce!

were of female faces with no men in the pictures. Some of the women are wearing truly striking headware. I have no idea who produced these covers.

Most, if not all, of these beautiful painted covers seem to have been reprinted from Ace romance pulps. I have several such 1940's pulps in my collection, with covers identical in style to the later comic books.

Headed by A. A. Wyn, Ace was one of the leading pulp publishers of the 1930s and '40s, best known for detective, western, and sports pulps. Very little is known about their romance pulps. I have close to 100 Ace pulps, with none dated later than February 1950.

As far as I know, Ace was among the first major publishers to give up pulps, apparently so the company could concentrate on comic books, magazines, and paperbacks. The Ace paperback phase began in 1952. Such prolific pulp publishers as Standard (Thrilling), Columbia (Double Action), Ziff-Davis, and Fiction House lasted well into the 1950s with several titles, but apparently Ace did not.

Two of Ace's pulp romance titles, *Complete Love* and *Ten-Story Love*, became comic books in the summer of 1951—the fifth and sixth Ace romance titles following the shakeout created by the "Love Glut." Ace published all six titles through 1956 on a regular basis.

Along with its painted covers, Ace used generally mediocre line-drawn covers on the company's romance titles until Ace switched exclusively to photo covers with all of its six romance titles, making the range from the late 1952 and early 1953.

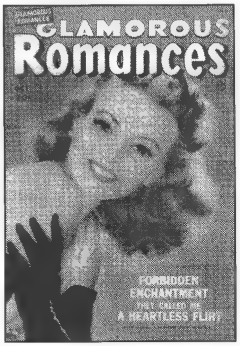
Unlike Fawcett's photo covers, which generally showed couples riding horses, roasting hot dogs, and in other generally innocent companionable activities, the Ace photo covers were generally facial closeups. And in contrast to the photo covers of several other companies, such as Quality, Eastern, and Standard, the Ace photo covers seldom depicted identifiable starlets and stars of the movies.

However, the pre-Code photo covers from Ace were sometimes "hotter" than those of other companies—in fact, a bit deceiving. The photo covers often promised more than the stories inside could deliver.

A few of the early Code-approved photo covers in 1955 seemed a bit racy for the Code, but they quickly became much lighter in tone, with smiles usually replacing passionate kisses.

The Ace romance stories were played straight, generally involving conflict but not much else. They were all solid stories, very much like pulp tales. They seldom involved any quirks—they were radically different from the tales that ACG, DC, and Marvel often produced—and only a few of the Ace stories involved what might be called "genre romance" with aspects of pop culture such as athletics, gangsters, delinquency, etc.

By 1956, photo covers were unusual except for Dell's TV and movie adaptations. Ace's romance comics must have seemed a bit strange. They may not have received strong national distribution, either—I don't recall ever seeing any Ace romance titles on the stands in 1956, nor do I recall ever seeing any in the ensuing decade at second-hand bookstores.



Ace's last known comics were *Real Love* #76 and *Love at First Sight* #43 (both November 1956), *Glamorous Romances* #90 (October 1956), *Complete Love* Vol. 32 #4 and *Ten-Story Love* Vol. 36 #5 (both September 1956) and *Love Experiences* #38 (June 1956). Jim Vadeboncoeur discovered *Love at First Sight* #43 a few years ago, leading me to wonder if there are any other 1956 Ace discoveries to be made? However, I have no reason to suspect that Ace published any comics with 1957 dates.

Until next time, let me know if you believe you've made any new romance comics discoveries!

Like most early Ace romance books, Glamorous Romances #48 (Oct 1950; actually issue #7) had a beautiful painted cover lifted from the publisher's massive pulp cover file.

Ace Romance Comics

Real Love #25-76 (Apr-Nov 1956)
Glamorous Romances #40-90 (Dotty, May 1949-Oct 1956)
All Love #26-32 (May 1949-May 1950)
Real Life Secrets/Real Secrets #1-5 (Sep 1949-May 1950)
Revealing Romances #1-6 (Sep 1949-Aug 1950)
All Romances #1-6 (Aug 1949-Aug 1950)
Love at First Sight #1-43 (Oct 1949-Nov 1956)
Love Experiences #1-5 (Oct 1949-Jun 1950); #6-38 (Apr 1951-Jun 1956)
Western Love Trails #7-9 (Nov 1949-Mar 1950)
Complete Love V26#2-V28#2 (Jun 1951-May 1953); Note: skipped numbering V29#3 (Jul 1953) to V32#4 (Sep 1956); No issues of V28#3 through V29#2; there are 34 total issues.
Ten-Story Love V29#33-V31#1 (Jul 1951-Feb 1953); Note: skipped numbering to V32#2 (April 1953) to V36#5 (Sep 1956). No issues of V31#2 to V32#1; there are 33 total issues.)

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from 1940s through the '60s. She has one of the most extensive collections of 1950s comic books in the United States and has contributed volumes of data to the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide.

MIGHTY MARVEL'S FANTASY FRONTIER!

BY WILL MURRAY

The rise of the mighty Marvel Comics empire from the ashes of the Atlas Distributing debacle of 1957 is usually chronicled in two phases, beginning with the fantasy monster mags that served as the breeding ground for the superhero titles that ultimately flowered with *The Fantastic Four* in 1961… then in phase two, exploding into a full-blown universe in 1962-3.

But there was a branch revival going on parallel to the monster/superhero explosion, and that was Marvel's resurrection of their once-proud Western line. It featured a number of firsts. The first revival of an Atlas hero. The first crossover villain, and the first Lee-Kirby heroic collaboration. There was a lot going on in Marvel's fantasy frontier, virtually unnoticed at the time and practically forgotten now.

To understand the Marvel western renaissance of the 1960s we have to go back to the Wild West—of the late 1940s comic book landscape.

Between 1948 and 1957 probably no one published more Western titles than Martin Goodman under his various corporate imprints. Beginning with *The Two-Gun Kid* in 1948, he soon added *Annie Oakley, Wild West, Tex Morgan, Tex Taylor*, and *Kid Colt, Hero of the West*—and a boom was on. It was a goldrush many publishers exploited in the waning days of the Golden Age of Comics when you couldn't give away any but the most famous of superheroes.

Historians like to point to DC's conversion of the classic *All-Star Comics* to *All-Star Western* in 1951 as signaling the death of the 1940s superhero, but that sea of change was foreshadowed in 1948 when Martin Goodman converted the revived superhero vehicle *All-Winners* to a four-color rodeo showcase retitled *All-Western Winners*. His first "western winners," the Two-Gun Kid and Kid Colt starred, with one new hero, the Black Rider premiering to make it a trio.

It might seem like one of the few times Goodman led the herd instead of following it, but in fact he was probably riding the same tidal wave of Western comics that had been swelling since Fawcett kicked it all off with *Hoplalong Cassidy* in 1946. Others jumped in, notably Hillman with *Western Fighters* and DC's launching of *Western Comics*, both early in 1948. At virtually the same time that *Western Winners* debuted, DC's *All-American Comics* became *All-American Western*. Clearly, the industry was in a desperate search for new heroes to replace the fading superhero.

However, Goodman's early foray into the Western genre was trampled by the anti-comic book stampede that was already underway. By the Winter of 1949-50, he had canceled or suspended about half of his Westerns. The survivors were retitled. It was a foreshadowing of the great Atlas retrenchment of 1957. But Goodman refused to abandon the dusty genre. Doggedly, he rebuilt his stable of gunfighters.

For a time, he tried emulating Fawcett's successful licensed movie Western hero line with their photo covers. Apparently all the top box-office cowboys were already taken. Goodman tried Rex Hart, converted it to *Whip Wilson*, and experimented with a stunt cowgirl named *Reno Browne*. But all three flopped. He also flirted with mixed genre titles like *Cowboy Romances* and *Cowgirl Romances* (similar to DC's experiment with *Romance Trail*), but even their photo covers didn't rope in the girl readers they were aimed at. After that, he stuck with the tried-and-true shoot-'em-up formula.

During the decade that followed, Goodman's Western roster consisted of the forgotten and the half-forgotten: the Kid from Texas, the Texas Kid, the Arizona Kid, the Ringo Kid, the Western Kid, the Prairie Kid, the Gunsmoke Kid, the Outlaw Kid, the Apache Kid, the Kid from Dodge City, Matt Slade, Gunfighter (soon renamed Kid Slade to boost sagging sales), Gunhawk, Arizona Annie, Billy Buckskin, and the Black Rider.

But by the Atlas collapse, this once-proud posse had been reduced to a solitary lawman, Wyatt Earp, which I suspect was kept going only because of the TV show of that

KID COLT OUTLAW
SOME SAY THAT OUR DESTINY IS PRE-ORDAINED BY SOMEONE HIGHER THAN MERE MAN, THAT WE ARE NOT MASTERS OF OUR OWN FATE! HEREWITH BEGINS THE BLOODSTAINED SAGA OF A LAD WHO WANTED ONLY TO LIVE IN PEACE, BUT WAS DRIVEN INTO A LIFE RACKED WITH PAIN...STAINED WITH HOT LEAD...HUNTED, DESPERATE...HATING THE LAW WHICH DROVE HIM TO A RUTHLESS, LIFE ON THE OWLHOOT TRAIL.
"HOT LEAD FOR CROOKED LAWMEN!"
GUNSMOKE, A SMALL TOWN IN THE HEART OF THE RANGE COUNTRY
THEY'LL LEARN YOU BOY C RIDERS TO KEEP CLEAR OF THE LAW IN PURGATORY, YA DRIED-UP OL' GALOOT!
OW! CUT IT OUT, LASH! YOU'RE KILLIN' ME!
LEAVE GABBY ALONE, YA ROTTEN COYOTE!
WELL... WELL! EF IT AIN'T THE NO-GUN KID OF THE BOX C!

QUIETLY THEY STEAL THROUGH THE BACK ENTRANCE OF THE MORTICIANS...
STEELING HIMSELF, BLAINE COLT LIFTS THE SHEET!
THERE WERE THEY THEY...THAT MUST BE DAD... UNDER...
OH, DAD!
GABBY! LOOK! DAD WAS SHOT!
THUNDERATION! FRENCH YOU'RE RIGHT!
GABBED IN HIS SKULL SO'S YA WOULDN'T SEE THE BULLET HOLE!
THAT HOLE WAS MADE BY A LARGE CALIBRE SLUG, FIRED FROM A HIGH-POWERED RIFLE! A BUFFALO GUN! THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN IN THESE PARTS WHO CARRIES A BUFFALO GUN!
JUMPIN' JEHOSHAPHAT—THE SHERIFF!
YES! DAD NEVER LOST TH' RANCH! YOU FORCE KILLED HIM! STICK! THEN, ACCUSED ME TO MAKE THE GRAB EASIER!
INTERCOURSE OF EMOTIONAL STRESS AND STRAIN, VENGEANCE CHILLS THE SOUL OF BLAINE COLT...
DAD, YUH ALWAYS WANTED ME TO WEAR A GUN... IT'S ONLY FITTING THAT I USE YORE'S FOR THE JOB
KID...TWO RIDERS ARE COMIN' IN FROM THE HILLS!

ALL ART © 2000 MHS

A rare look at pages 1 and 7 from the origin of Kid Colt, Outlaw/Hero of the West (artist unknown)

name, and just Goodman's top hands. Some 20 Atlas Western titles, including the popular *Ringo Kid* and *Rawhide Kid* and were dry-clulched. After hiccuping, *Gunsmoke Western, Kid Colt, Outlaw,* and *Two-Gun Kid* straggled along. They all had had long but convoluted careers.

Kid Colt had started life as a red-headed young cowpoke in Abiline, Wyoming. For the first two issues, he was standard cowboy starring in *Kid Colt, Hero of the West*. But with #3, the book was retitled *Kid Colt, Outlaw*. Gunning down outlaw Lash Larribee in revenge for his father Dan's murder, Blaine Colt foolishly flees the prospects of trial and near-certain exoneration on his pony, Steel, and becomes the much-wanted Robin Hood of the West, Kid Colt. Along the trail, he somehow turns blonde. A white buckskin vest over his red flannel shirt becomes his trademark—along with his twin Colt .45 Peacemakers. Kid Colt's appeal was the timeless one of a misunderstood teenager fleeing the authorities over a single mistake, forever hunted and always yearning for that illusive pardon. No doubt Billy the Kid was the true-life inspiration. Redressed, the identical formula made Spider-Man a huge success in the '60s. Unlike Spider-Man, Kid Colt never aged, remaining an eternal 17.

The Two-Gun Kid had a similar origin. Clay Harder returns home to Sundown, Arizona to get between Bull Yaeger and Clay's father, old Seth Harder. When Yaeger guns down Clay's father over the Circle-H Ranch, Clay turns his angry Colts on Bull. A friendly sheriff dubs him the Two-Gun Kid and Clay sells the family spread to ride the range, dispensing two-gun justice and singing like an authentic Hollywood cowboy. Although Goodman's first Western hero, *The Two-Gun Kid* was actually canceled in 1949 after only ten issues. Revived in 1953, he went on to enduring success singing his signature song and riding his trusty mount, Cyclone. Syd Shores was the artist who kicked off Two-Gun.

Gunsmoke Western was a retitling of *Western Tales of the Black Rider*. A mysterious ebony-clad cowboy avenger first introduced in the premier *All-Western Winners* back in 1948, he was really country sawbones Doc Masters, who after mounting his swayback cayuse, Ichabod, become the Black Rider and Satan. Syd Shores was primary artist. One of Marvel's most popular Western heroes, the Black Rider didn't survive the transition to *Gunsmoke Western*. They retitled it *Gunsmoke Western* at almost exactly the same time in 1955 that the popular *Gunsmoke* radio show was adapted for television, and one suspects this was *not* a coincidence.

In the post-Atlas Western era, Lee found himself bereft of two of his top Western ink-slingers, bullpen mainstay Syd Shores who had kicked off both Kid Colt and Two-Gun, and the most recent Two-Gun Kid artist, Chuck Miller, who had been drawing it since issue #15. Joe Maneely took over, only to die suddenly just as Lee began rounding up comics talent once more. For an unknown period of months, Lee had filled his revitalized titles with old inventory and the work of a select few. Just as he had with his fantasy titles, Lee seemed slow to recognize the selling power of Jack Kirby. His primary Western artists were pretty much the same dependable outfit that turned out his fantasy tales—Don Heck, Dick Ayers, Paul Reinman, Sol Brodsky, Gene Colan, and a few strays.

Conspicuously absent is Steve Ditko, who as far as I can tell, drew only two Western shorts for Lee, one in *2-Gun Western* #4 in 1956 and another in

Gunsmoke Western #66 (September 1961). Perhaps Lee didn't care for Ditko on Westerns, just as he seldom gave Dick Ayers fantasy stories to draw.

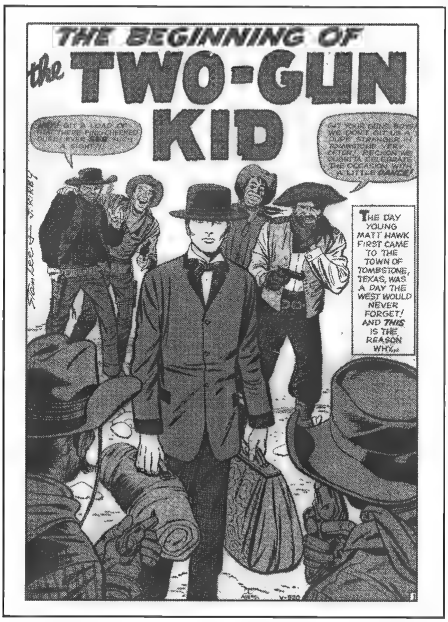
Prior to the Atlas collapse, Kirby had begun turning out stray short Western yarns for Lee. One appeared in *Two-Gun Western* and the other in *Quick-Trigger Western* in 1957. Then Kirby revived the Black Rider for *The Black Rider Rides Again!*, drawing almost the entire first issue before Lee had to shut down his line.

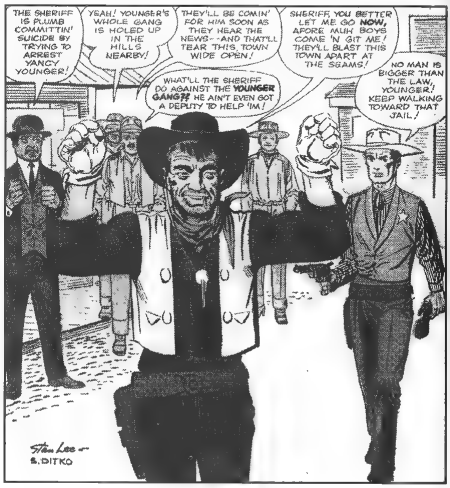
When Marvel started rebuilding in late 1958, Lee put Kirby on his fantasy books, but other than sprinkling the leftover *Black Rider* #2 inventory into *Kid Colt, Outlaw* and *Gunsmoke Western*, he didn't press Kirby to saddle up straightaway. Evidently, Lee considered him primarily a fantasy artist.

Jack Keller continued as the exclusive Kid Colt artist, occasionally inked by people ranging from Chris Rule, Dick Ayers, and unidentified others. He had been the strip's mainstay since *Kid Colt, Outlaw* #25 (March 1953) and the sole survivor of a long line of Kid Colt artists that included distinguished names like Russ Heath, Pete Tumlinson, Gene Colan, Doug Wildey, Joe Maneely, Sol Brodsky, and Dick Ayers. The first Kid Colt artist seems to have been Syd Shores inked by Chu Hing, although several people drew his adventures in his inaugural issue.

With the help of Kirby's magic, the legend of Two-Gun Kid begins again in issue #60 (Nov 1961)

Two-Gun Kid had a rougher ride to artistic stability. Jack Kirby drew a great cover for #48, but the interiors were the work of Patsy Walker artist Al Hartley, who took over after a single Matt Baker issue. Jack Davis, who earlier replaced the late Joe Maneely, did *Two-Gun Kid* #45 and 46. With #49, however, John Severin confidently assumed the reins, drawing a series of excellent adventures for over a year. Severin's interpretation proved so dynamic, Two-Gun was given a bunk next to Kid Colt starting in *Gunsmoke Western* #57. (Severin had briefly drawn the Kid during his heyday.)


THE BEGINNING OF
the TWO-GUN KID
THE DAY YOUNG MATT HAWK FIRST CAME TO THE TOWN OF TOMBSTONE, TEXAS, WAS A DAY THE WEST WOULD NEVER FORGET! AND THIS IS THE REASON WHY...


THE SHERIFF IS PLUMB COMMITTIN' SUICIDE BY TRYING TO ARREST YANCY YOUNGER!
YEAH! YOUNGER'S WHOLE GANG IS HOLED UP IN THE HILLS NEARBY!
THEY'LL BE COMIN' FOR HIM SOON AS THEY HEAR THE NEWS--AND THAT'LL TEAR THIS TOWN WIDE OPEN!
SHERIFF, YOU BETTER LET ME GO NOW, AFORE MUH BOYS COME 'N GIT ME! THEY'LL BLAST THIS TOWN APART AT THE SEAMS!
NO MAN IS BIGGER THAN THE LAW, YOUNGER! KEEP WALKING TOWARD THAT JAIL!
WHAT'LL THE SHERIFF DO AGAINST THE YOUNGER GANG? HE AIN'T EVEN GOT A DEPUTY TO HELP 'IM!
Stan Lee
S. DITKO

Fantasy maestro Steve Ditko drew a few Marvel western stories, including "...Yancy Younger!" in *Gunsmoke Western* #66 (Sep 1961)

On issues with Spring 1959 cover-dates, Kirby is crowned main Marvel cover artist for the Westerns as well as for the fantasy titles. Another year would pass before Kirby Western interior work started appearing.

The first was a modest 4-pager, "Dance or Draw, Tenderfoot" in *Two-Gun Kid* #54 (June 1960). The next month, Kirby drew two stories for *Gunsmoke Western* #59. Another first was the initial artistic collaboration between Kirby and inker Dick Ayers. This historic first happened on the cover of *Wyatt Earp* #29 (June 1960)... the final issue.

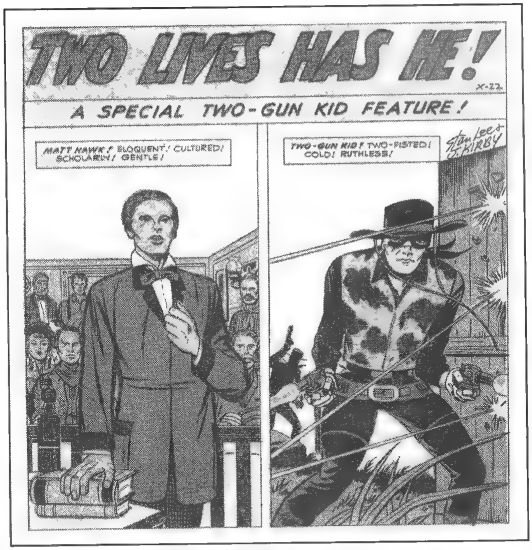
But the best of the West was yet to bust loose.

Goodman retired Wyatt Earp's badge in favor of a revival of the *Rawhide Kid*. This title had an interesting history. Launched in 1955, it featured a young buckskin-clad ranch hand who wielded a whip. The Comics Code ultimately objected to the whip, and it was discarded with issue #10. Rawhide also traded in his fringed buckskins for a black cavalry shirt at the same time. Artist Bob Brown launched the series, but Dick Ayers was the principal artist up to that Black Day at Bad Rock in April, 1957 when Atlas suspended publishing with issues cover-dated between July and September. (However, Lee kept buying Wyatt Earp stories from Ayers all through the purchasing drought—just as he may kept buying Two-Gun Kid stories from Joe Maneely

and Kid Colt tales from Jack Keller. Again, one suspects his chief motivation was to cash in on Hugh O'Brian's *Wyatt Earp* TV show. And why not? At the same time he was publishing his *Wyatt Earp*, both Dell and Charlton had their versions on the stands!

Collectors scanning the covers of the '50s *Rawhide Kid* might easily jump to the conclusion that it's the same character as the one revived in 1960 by Lee and Jack Kirby. Not so. The resemblance is striking, but superficial. Ayers' Kid was tall, rangy, yellow-haired ranch wrangler with a kid sidekick named Randy Clayton, while the Kirby conception was a flame-haired pint-sized hellion forever riding the owlhoot trail *a la* Kid Colt for a crime he did not commit. Although they wore identical black cavalry tunics, they rode entirely different horses—a sure sign of individual identity. The rancher version's steed was named Apache. His successor rode Nightwind. For some reason, the first Rawhide Kid's true name was never revealed. Some folks called him "Rawhide," others just growled "Kid." It depended on which side of the law they operated on.

The first Lee-Kirby *Rawhide Kid* was #17, August, 1960, which appeared two years after #16. Kirby hit the ground running. Although Stan Lee was once again simply rehashing the winning Kid Colt formula, Kirby, a veteran of classic Western comics like *Bulls-Eye* and *Boy's Ranch*, tackled it as if it were new. From the first story, Kirby's Rawhide Kid crackles with unbridled energy and raw power—the hallmarks of his resurging creativity.


TWO LIVES HAS HE!
A SPECIAL TWO-GUN KID FEATURE!
MATT HAWK ? ELOQUENT? CULTURED? SCHOLARLY? GENTLE?
TWO-GUN KID ? TWO-FISTED? COLD? RUTHLESS?
Stan Lee
Jack KIRBY

Kirby's inimitable style dominates this classic Marvel Silver Age western splash from *Two-Gun Kid* #61 (Jan 1963)

The difference between the Kirby Atlas Westerns and those that appeared previously is one of fundamental transformation. The lean, gangling figures of yore were now imbued with a rippling, muscular power. The 1950s Jack Kirby was dead. King Kirby was born from his ashes. Nothing demonstrates this more than Kirby's Rawhide Kid.

His origin was old hat… but redone Kirby style.

Young Johnny Bart was adopted by an old Texas Ranger, Ben Bart by name, at a tender age. Ben taught him to shoot as if possessed. This skill came in handy when Hawk Brown and his partner Spade gunned down old Ben Bart in cold blood. Just 18 and hot-headed, Johnny lit out after them, avenging his uncle with his lightning draw. Vowing to seek out other varmints like Hawk, he becomes the Rawhide Kid and takes to the low trails. Johnny's life soon takes a wrong turn when he guns down a rustler named Sam Barker and turns tail instead of standing fair trial. Thus, in one tragic instant Johnny Bart goes from being a Two-Gun Kid clone to a fair facsimile of Kid Colt. He was known as the legendary Rawhide Kid because he had grown up in rough-and-tumble Rawhide, Texas.

I imagine Goodman and Lee revived the Rawhide Kid name to cash in on the *Rawhide* TV show then in its second season, just as they kept *Gunsmoke Western* going through thick and thin in the hope fans of TV's *Gunsmoke* would be fooled into buying that title, thinking there was a connection. There wasn't. But no media tie-in was needed for *The Rawhide Kid*. These stories were in a class of their own. With titles like "Fight or Crawl, Kid," "Riot in Railtown," "Shoot-Out With Rock Rorick," "Showdown with the Crow Magnum Gang" and "The Girl, the Gunman, and the Apaches," Lee and Kirby served up a brand of rip-roaring hell-for-leather action the likes of which wouldn't be seen again until they reteamed on Captain America.

They especially played up the fact that Rawhide was a sawed-off saddletramp who went out of his way to dodge trouble. Invariably, bigger, brawnier bad guys would pick on him, and the Kid instantly detonated like a short-fused firecracker of smashing fists and spitting guns. I wonder if Kirby—a small guy himself who knew what it was like to be picked on—wasn't vicariously putting himself into the boots of the Rawhide Kid ever time he sat at his drawing board? (Rumor has it, however, that *Wanted: Dead or Alive* TV star Steve McQueen was his model for the Kid, although you can see traces of James Dean, too, if squint.)

Not since his superlative stint on *Fighting American* had Jack Kirby drawn such poetic violence as he uncorked in the exploits of the Rawhide Kid. This series also marks the first significant Lee-Kirby collaboration in the post-Atlas era. Inspired by Kirby's exuberant pencils, Lee exceeded himself in ways he could not on Kid Colt. If this had been a superhero book, it would be considered a classic. In fact, the art and storytelling were vastly superior to what Kirby was doing over in the monster books. It put the earliest issues of *The Fantastic Four* to shame. Although some of that may be because in the beginning, the *FF* lacked Dick Ayers' assured yet rough-and-tumble inks. Here, coalesced in one overlooked title, the artistic core of the Marvel Universe was forming.

It's important to realize that what Lee and Kirby did with the Rawhide Kid—reviving a character in semblance, but not actuality—is exactly the strategy they employed to bring back the Human Torch a year later in *The Fantastic Four*. Later, this would become the SOP for bringing back defunct Timely superheroes. I imagine Kirby, who preferred inventing new characters to resurrecting old ones, was the spark behind this approach… but it should be noted that he did it first with the Rawhide Kid.

Kirby claimed *Rawhide Kid* outsold the rest of the Marvel line at one point. It must have been true because in 1960, he abruptly took over penciling chores on the *Two-Gun Kid*, beginning with "Six-Gun Showdown" in *Gunsmoke Western* #62 (January 1961). One of the first things Kirby did was give this Kid a Texas-Ranger style tunic similar to Rawhide's. If the editorial thinking was to transform Two-Gun into a taller version of the Rawhide Kid, the thinking was misguided. Maybe they should have let him keep his old shirt and dropped the singing cowboy act. After two Kirby issues, and only a pair of Kirby shorts in *Gunsmoke Western*, *Two-Gun Kid* was abruptly canceled. But not before the Kid battled a Wild West version of Fin Fang Foom, a villain the Rawhide Kid had already defeated, and a brute ominously called the Hulk.

The Western Hulk was giant bruiser the Kid encountered in *Gunsmoke Western* #63 (March 1961), a solid year before Bruce Banner received his fateful dose of Gamma rays. The story was called "The Hands of the Hulk." This was only one of many forgotten characters dubbed the Hulk in those days. Most were alien creatures or robots. Not this guy. He was only an overgrown saloon bully with an unbridled sense of himself and the bad luck to tangle with the wrong Kid.

"The Monster of Hidden Valley" in *Two-Gun Kid* #58 was another matter. A sprawling two-parter that might have been torn from the pages of *Strange Tales*, it broke the mold for Marvel Westerns. Behind a stockade fence lurks a great orange-brown beast, a kind of Rocky Mountain dragon. Two-Gun Kid succeeds in discovering its anticlimactic secret—it's only a giant bison made up to look like a lizard by rustlers. Kirby retells Two-Gun's origin in the back, and the happy-go-lucky drifter in black appears on the verge of a new lease on life.

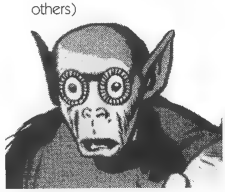
Yet the next issue proved to be the last. The lead story, "At the Mercy of Wolf Waco," constitutes the first villain crossover in modern Marvel history. Back in *Rawhide Kid* #18, that Kid tangled with a bearded outlaw calling himself Wolf Waco in a wild-and-woolly Lee-Kirby extravaganza. At the climax, Wolf goes over a cliff, to all appearances to his death. Yet the unsavory owlhoot who resurfaces in *Two-Gun Kid* #59 just six months later is identical in looks and duds. No footnote connects these two stories, but Waco appears to be the same character. He displays the same *modus operandi* too. Both times, he brow- *(Continued on page 52)*

A CBM CHECKLIST

TIMELY-ATLAS-MARVEL WESTERN CHRONOLOGY

Two-Gun Kid #1 (Mar 1948)
Annie Oakley #1 (Spr 1948)
Wild West #1 (Spr 1948)
Tex Morgan #1 (Aug 1948)
Kid Colt, Hero of the West #1 (Aug 1948)
Tex Taylor #1 (Sep 1948)
Wild Western #3 (Sep 1948; retitling of Wild West)
Blaze Carson #1 (Sep 1948)
Annie Oakley #4 (Nov 1948; suspended)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #3 (Dec 1948; retitling)
All Western Winners #2 (Win 1948-49; 1st issue; intro Black Rider)
Best Western #58 (Jun 1949; cancelled)
Western Winners #5 (Jun 1949; retitling of All-Western Winners)
Rex Hart #6 (Aug 1949; retitling of Blaze Carson)
Cowboy Romances #1 (Oct 1949)
Wild Western #9 (Oct 1949; suspended)
Western Outlaws & Sheriffs #60 (Dec 1949; retitling of Best Western)
Two-Gun Kid #10 (Nov 1949; suspended)
Cowgirl Romances #28 (Jan 1950; only issue)
Tex Morgan #9 (Feb 1950; cancelled)
Wild Western #10 (Apr 1950; revived)
Black Rider #8 (Mar 1950 retitling of Western Winners)
Tex Taylor #9 (Mar 1950; cancelled)
Reno Browne, Hollywood's Greatest Cowgirl #50 (Apr 1950)
Whip Wilson #9 (Apr 1950; retitling of Rex Hart)
Wild Western #15 (Aug 1950; Apache Kid & Red Larabee; Gunhawk begins)
The Gunhawk #12 (Nov 1950; retitling of Whip Wilson)
Two-Gun Western #5 (Nov 1950; 2nd series; Apache Kid begins)
Apache Kid #53 (Dec 1950; retitling of Western Gunfighters)
The Texas Kid #1 (Jan 1951)
Red Warrior #1 (Jan 1951)
Apache Kid #2 (Feb 1951; numbering adjusted)
Red Warrior #6 (Dec 1951; cancelled)
The Gunhawk #18 (Dec 1951; cancelled)
The Apache Kid #10 (Jan 1952; suspended)
Two-Gun Western #14 (Jun 1952; cancelled)
The Texas Kid #10 (Jul 1952; cancelled)
Two-Gun Kid #11 (Dec 1953; first revival)
Western Outlaws #1 (Feb 1954)
The Ringo Kid #1 (Aug 1954)
Outlaw Fighters #1 (Aug 1954)
The Outlaw Kid #1 (Sep 1954)
Western Thrillers #1 (Nov 1954)
The Western Kid #1 (Dec 1954)
The Apache Kid #11 (Dec 1954; revived)
Cowboy Action #5 (Mar 1955; retitling of Western Thrillers)
Rawhide Kid #1 (Mar 1955)
Outlaw Fighters #5 (Apr 1955; cancelled)
Western Tales Of The Black Rider #28 (May 1955; retitling of Black Rider)
Annie Oakley #5 (Jun 1955; revived)
Wyatt Earp #1 (Nov 1955)
Billy Buckskin Western #1 (Nov 1955)
Gunsmoke Western #32 (Dec 1955; Retitling of Western Tales of Black Rider; Kid Colt begins)
Frontier Western #1 (Feb 1956)
The Apache Kid #19 (Apr 1956; cancelled)
Matt Slade, Gunfighter #1 (May 1956)
Quick-Trigger Western #12 (May 1956; retitling of Cowboy Action)
2-Gun Western #4 (May 1956; retitling of Billy Buckskin)
Western Gunfighters #20 (Jun 1956; retitling of Apache Kid)
Annie Oakley #11 (Jun 1956; cancelled)

Two-Gun Western #5 (Jul 1956; retitling of 2-Gun Western)
Rawhide Kid #10 (Sep 1956; Rawhide loses his whip and buckskins)
Six-Gun Western #1 (Jan 1957)
Western Trails #1 (May 1957; Ringo Kid starts)
Kid Slade, Gunfighter #5 (May 1957; retitling of Matt Slade, Gunfighter)
The Kid From Texas #1 (Jun 1957)
The Kid From Dodge City #1 (Jul 1957)
The Outlaw Kid #19 (Jul 1957; cancelled)
Six-Gun Western #4 (Jul 1957; cancelled)
Kid Slade, Gunfighter #8 (Jul 1957; cancelled)
Western Trails #2 (Jul 1957; cancelled)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #74 (Jul 1957; suspended)
Gunsmoke Western #42 (Aug 1957; suspended)
Two-Gun Kid #38 (Aug 1957; suspended)
Wyatt Earp #35 (Aug 1957; suspended)
Frontier Western #2 (Aug 1957; cancelled)
The Kid From Texas #2 (Aug 1957; cancelled)
Western Gunfighters #27 (Aug 1957; cancelled)
Western OutlawS #21 (Aug 1957; cancelled)
The Western Kid #17 (Aug 1957; cancelled)
The Kid From Dodge City #2 (Sep 1957; cancelled)
Quick-Trigger Western #19 (Sep 1957; cancelled)
The Ringo Kid #21 (Sep 1957; cancelled)
Two-Gun Western #12 (Sep 1957; cancelled)
Wild Western #57 (Sep 1957; cancelled)
The Black Rider Rides Again! #1 (Sep 1957; cancelled)
Rawhide Kid #16 (Sep 1957; cancelled)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #75 (Nov 1957; restarted)
Gunsmoke Western #43 (Nov 1957; restarted)
Two-Gun Kid #39 (Dec 957; restarted)
Wyatt Earp #36 (Dec 1957; restarted)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #84 (May 1959; First Sam Hawk)
Gunsmoke Western #57 (Mar 1960; Two-Gun Kid feature begins)
Gunsmoke Western #58 (May 1960; "The Hands of the Hulk")
Wyatt Earp #29 (Jun 1960; last issue)
Rawhide Kid #17 (Aug 1960; revived; new origin)
Rawhide Kid #18 (Oct 1960; "At the Mercy of Wolf Waco")
Kid Colt #93 (Oct 1960; "The Ghost of Midnight Montain")
Two-Gun Kid #58 (Feb 1961; First Kirby retooling; "The Monster of Hidden Valley")
Two-Gun Kid #59 (Apr 1961; "At the Mercy of Wolf Waco"; Last Issue)
Rawhide Kid #22 (Jun 1961; "Beware! The Terrible Totem!)
Kid Colt #100 (Sep 1961; "Secret of the Witch-Doctor")
Two-Gun Kid #60 (Nov 1961; 2nd revival; new origin)
Kid Colt #102 (Jan 1962; "The Ghost of Silver City")
Kid Colt #107 (Nov 1962; "The Giant Monster of Hidden Valley")
Gunsmoke Western #73 (Nov 1962; "I Can Outdraw Kid Colt!")
Rawhide Kid #32 (Feb 1963; Last Kirby issue)
Two-Gun Kid #62 (Mar 1963; Last Kirby issue)
Gunsmoke Western #77 (Jul 1963; last issue)
Rawhide Kid #40 (Jun 1964; Two-Gun Kid X-over)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #121 (Mar 1965; Rawhide Kid x-over)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #125 (Nov 1965; Two-Gun Kid x-over)
Rawhide Kid #50 (Feb 1966; Kid Colt x-over)
Two-Gun Kid #85 (Jan 1967)
Two-Gun Kid #89 (Sep 1967; "Three Rode Together" Kid Colt & Rawhide X-over)
Ghost Rider #7 (Nov 1967; cancelled)
Two-Gun Kid #92 (Mar 1968; suspended; last new story)
Mighty Marvel Western #1 (Oct 1968; reprints)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #139 (Mar 1968; suspended)
Rawhide Kid #64 (Jun 1968; Kid Colt backup series begins, ends #67)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #140 (Nov 1969; revived; last new story)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #141 (Dec 1969; last new Two-Gun Kid story)
Two-Gun Kid #93 (Jul 1970; revived as reprint series)
The Outlaw Kid #1 (Aug 1970; revived as reprint series)
Western Gunfighters #1 (Aug 1970; intro Gunhawk)
Rawhide Kid #89 (Jul 1971; Kid Colt joins Rawhide for several issues)
Western Gunfighters #6 (Sep 1971; Death of Ghost Rider)
Marvel Spotlight #1 (Nov 1971; intro Red Wolf)
Western Gunfighters #7 (Jan 1972; New Ghost Rider)
Red Wolf #1 (May 1972)
The Outlaw Kid #10 (Jun 1972; new origin & stories)
Gunhawks #1 (Oct 1972)
The Outlaw Kid #16 (Jun 1973; last new story)
Gunhawks #6 (Aug 1973; Death of Kid Cassidy)
Red Wolf #9 (Sep 1973; last issue)
Gunhawk #7 (Oct 1973; retitling of Gunhawks; last issue)
Rawhide Kid #115 (Oct 1973; last new story)
Western Team-Up #1 (Nov 1973; Rawhide Kid & Dakota Kid)
The Outlaw Kid #30 (Oct 1975; cancelled)
Mighty Marvel Western #46 (Sep 1976; cancelled)
Two-Gun Kid #136 (Apr 1977; last issue)
Kid Colt, Outlaw #229 (Apr 1979; last issue)
Rawhide Kid #151 (May 1979; last issue)
Rawhide Kid #1 (Aug 1985; Mini-series revival)
Rawhide Kid #4 (Nov 1985; Death of the Rawide Kid)
Original Ghost Rider #3 (Sep 1992; new Night Rider stories begin)
Blaze Of Glory #1-4 (Feb/Mar 2000; Last stand of Kid Colt, Two-Gun Kid, Ghost Rider, Red Wolf, Outlaw Kid and others)



Okay, Marvel fans, time to test your knowledge. It's the early 1960s... what are the names of these heroes: 1) He was a lawyer named Matt and he had a slightly "foggy" assistant; 2) This second hero turned to fighting criminals when his Uncle Ben was murdered; 3) The third was a youth whose temper could flame on at any time. 4) Their villains included a Ringmaster and his Circus of Crime, a fat man with a dream of criminal power, a master of instant disguise, a man who was as fast as quicksilver, a man clad in a black panther costume, and others named the Scorpion, and the Enforcers, and the greatest of all was a power-hungry genius clad head to foot in armor; and 5) The stories in the early '60s were primarily written and illustrated by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby.

No, not Daredevil, Spider-Man and the Human Torch. One last clue: these heroes' comics started back in the 1940s and 1950s, and ran almost 40 years. Of course, the heroes we are talking about are the Two-Gun Kid, Rawhide Kid, and Kid Colt, Outlaw.

While the above quiz may not get many right answers, it is a good indicator of just how little people know about the other comics that Marvel was publishing for decades, the Westerns. They were good, easy reading, with nary a continuing story to worry about. And the inside and cover talent involved from the '60s through the '80s was incredible: Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Roy Thomas, Dick Ayers, Larry Lieber, Gene Colan, Doug Wildey, Jack Davis, Dennis O'Neil, Gil Kane, Joe Sinnott, Reed Crandall, Herb Trimpe, Gary Friedrich, Marv Wolfman, Jerry Siegel, Al Williamson, Tom Sutton, and Steranko (the artist formerly known as Jim), to name just a few.

For many a year, these Westerns had been discarded to the quarter bins in many comic shops, but now that *Blaze of Glory* has been received with a great deal of success, interest in the Western comics of old has come back again.

Return to those thrilling days of yesteryear

As the tumbleweed rolls across the desert from a lonely wind, so comes riding the hero who made the West. It's funny when you think about it but none of the Western heroes ever really did anything to build the Old West, but they did correct injustices and made it possible for others to build the West. The hero gunfighter of Marvel lore was more a symbol than anything else. The rock-steady man who stood for justice in the middle of a dusty street, a protector of the good and the new from crazy, law-breaking gunslingers who cared nothing for anyone.

As most people know, Westerns used to very popular in the movies, on TV, and in the comics. Marvel, under either its own or the Timely or Atlas imprints, produced *Tex Morgan, Tex Taylor, Tex Dawson, Texas Kid, The Kid from Texas, The Kid from Dodge City, Arizona Kid, Dakota Kid, Apache Kid, Gunsmoke Kid, Rawhide Kid, Kid Slade,* and *Two Gun Kid.* Let's not forget the *Sunset Riders, Ghost Rider, Night Rider, Phantom Rider* and *Black Rider.* There was *Kid Colt, Outlaw, Outlaw Kid, Outlaw Fighters, Western Outlaws*, plus *Western Outlaws and Sheriffs*. There were *Western Trails, Western Thrills, Western Kid, Frontier Western, Quick-Trigger Western, Ringo Kid Western, Six-Gun Western, Two-Gun Western, Billy Buckskin Western, All Western Winners, Gunsmoke Western, Western Gunfighters, The Mighty Marvel Western, Best Western*, and *Western Team-Up*. There was plenty of Cowboy Action in *Rex Hart, Annie Oakley, Wyatt Earp, Whip Wilson, Red Warrior, Arrowhead, Gunhawk, Gunhawks, Gun-Slinger, Gunslingers, Blaze Carson*, and *Blaze of Glory*. And even with all these titles, I think I missed a few. (They even published a series of Western romance comics under a different imprint.)

The Two-Gun Kid

Inasmuch as the western heroes of Marvel—most of them, anyway—were around in the days of Marvel's predecessor, Atlas Comics, there is one hero who definitely changed not only his real name but his appearance as well. That was the Two-Gun Kid, one of the most popular of the Marvel gunfighters. In the Atlas days, he had been an unmasked gunman named Clay Harder who roamed the West righting wrongs. He was virile and open. His quick hands led him to be a feared name to the bad guys. Nothing could defeat him. Nothing, that is, except time, in more ways than one.

In 1962, Marvel redid the Two-Gun Kid from top to bottom. With the return of the comic after more than a year's absence with #60 (November 1962), we were introduced to a scrawny runt named Matt Hawk, a lawyer from back east, aiming to set up his practice in Tombstone. He soon discovered that only fighting men survived in the Old West. An aging gunfighter named Ben Dancer took Hawk under his wing and showed him every trick he knew. Gone was meek, unarmed attorney Matt Hawk. In his place was the bold and masked Two-Gun Kid (taking over a name he recalled as belonging to a fictional character, thus making all the Clay Harder stories not real—which would cause more confusion to continuity fiends down the line). (And a much younger Marshal Ben Dancer appeared in *Gunsmoke Western* #75 in March 1963, several months after the older Ben.)

The Kid's early days were marked by suspicion, especially by blonde schoolteacher Nancy Carter (looking very much like Captain America's Sharon Carter). Nancy was the love of Matt's life, but his dual identity became a burden when her step-brother was killed by outlaws and she believed the Kid to be responsible. Rounding out the cast were Sheriff Bret Barton and a loveable ex-boxer named "Boom-Boom" Brown, who was the only man to know Matt and the Kid were one and the same.

Stan Lee and Larry Lieber wrote the Kid's early adventures, with art provided by Jack Kirby and Dick Ayers. The style back then was that of Kirby's early adventures of the Fantastic Four, and Lee's scripts for the periods were good, well-thought out plots. As Stan and Jack moved on, Dick Ayers kept handling most of the art chores. Following Stan Lee and Larry Lieber in the writing department were Roy Thomas, Gary Friedrich, Steve Skeates,

Denny O'Neil and even a young Marv Wolfman.

Among the gunfighters who tried to challenge the Kid's reputation as the fastest gun in the West were Cole Younger and Billy the Kid, the latter of which we discover was trained by the Two-Gun Kid himself. One incident the writers screwed up on was having Two-Gun ride to the Alamo to save them from being besieged by the Mexican Army (*TGK* #75). The problem with the writing of this story was that the Alamo was overrun in 1836, and the Kid's adventures were taking place 50 years later in the 1870s. Ah, well, it had a striking cover by Jack Kirby. (Caught in their mistake, Marvel added a caption to the splash page in a later reprint in which they wondered what would have happened if the Kid had been around 40 years earlier at the Alamo, thus making it now a fantasy tale.)

Most of the villains Matt/Two-Gun faced were ordinary gunslingers, but some definitely bore a resemblance to later Marvel characters. In particular was a black-clad character called the Panther that the Kid went up against in *Two Gun Kid* #77 (September 1965). A predecessor to the Black Panther's first appearance in *Fantastic Four* #52 (July 1966) by almost a year, the Old West's Panther was a crook, and in later reprints they colored his costume red.

great Gil Kane, picking up reprint issues is a joy.)

The Two-Gun Kid was the first of the breed for Marvel. He debuted in March 1948 in the first issue of his own title (which ran until #136 in April 1977) and made numerous appearances in other comics. Reprints can be found in his own title from #93 on and in any of the 46 issues of *MMW*. He was the first, but definitely not the last.

The Rawhide Kid

The original Rawhide Kid first rode the Old West trails in March 1955 with the appearance of his own title. The look of the original Kid was different from that of the later Kid. Tales often reflected his being older and settled on a ranch with a young boy, Randy Clayton. (The names of Clayton, Clay, and Ben were used a great deal in Marvel Westerns).

The Rawhide Kid that became the one known to us in the '60s and onward made his first appearance in August 1960 in the 17th issue of *RK*, which was the first since it stopped publishing with #16, three years before. Known early on as Johnny Bart and later as Johnny Clay, the Rawhide Kid was a sort of wandering knight. On the run from the law, he just wanted to be left in peace

WHO'S WHO IN... Mighty Marvel Westerns

BY PETER BOSCH

(A special note about reprints: Marvel's Western stories probably went through more reprints than any other of Marvel's genres did. The adventures of the Two-Gun Kid and others would see the light of day again and then yet again in each hero's titles and in the reprint titles, *The Mighty Marvel Western* (*MMW*) and *Western Gunfighters* (*WG*), until the demise of the Western comic. And when Marvel ran out of stories of that particular version of the character, they would redo the old character's stories in some way. For example, Marvel began reprinting the pre-Matt Hawk Two-Gun Kid stories, drew a mask over the Clay Harder Two-Gun Kid and gave him the new TGK's clothes. When that got time consuming, one supposes, they used the Harder stories as they were and inserted a caption that these were the early adventures of Matt that fell between the time he graduated law school and became the Kid. However, with over half a hundred glorious new covers by the late,

and to be accepted by others. Many is the time when he would be sitting in a saloon, oftentimes with a glass of milk in front of him, his hat would be low over his eyes in order to not be recognized. Inevitably, some bully would come along and try to disturb his peace. That's something the Kid would never put up with. He was also a fighter of causes, helping the weak when the evil strong were threatening them. There was a nobility to him.

The Kid was perhaps the youngest of them, occasionally described as being barely out of his teens. He was certainly the shortest. In an early story, Stan Lee described him as 5'3" tall and weighing about 130 pounds.

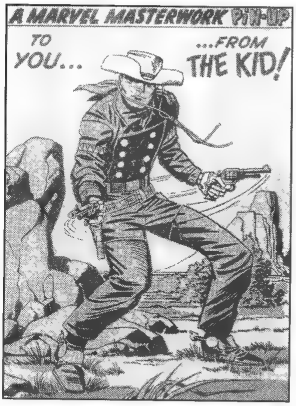
The Kid was trained by his Uncle Ben (see what I mean?), a former Texas Ranger, and when that man was ambushed in a gun fight, Johnny went after the killers. Facing the two, he just shot the guns out of their hands (something all Marvel heroes were apt to do) and left them to be tried for their crimes. It

would be later learned that Ben was his uncle in name only, and that Johnny was found by Ben as a child after a murderous attack by Indians on the covered wagon his family was in (*RK* #45). His two brothers were separated from him but he would find them later.

Kirby and Lee fans will enjoy the early adventures of the Kid. Like their stories in *Two-Gun Kid*, the plots and characterizations were fun to read. Later issues under the supervision of writers like Denny O'Neil and others were not very satisfying and stories turned into a romance a month for the wandering cowpoke. While females seldom played a role in the early issues under Lee and Kirby, they were there in almost every issue under O'Neil and even Lee's brother Larry Lieber, who must also be credited with the good writing of earlier issues.

This composite design of the three Marvel western heroes was also used on a T-shirt during the 1960s

Rawhide's run came to a close with issue #151 in May 1979, becoming the last of the big three to finish up their respective titles. Reprints would also appear in .the aforementioned *MMW* #1-46. There was also a well-written 4 issue miniseries simply called *The Rawhide Kid* (from August to November 1985), chronicling the later years in the Kid's life.



All ART © 2000 MEG

The legendary Jack Kirby drew this all-time classic pin-up of the Rawhide Kid during the heyday of Marvel pin-up pages

Kid Colt, Outlaw

Kid Colt completes the big three of Marvel's Western heroes and probably the one who underwent less changing than the other two big guns. He was sporting his cowhide vest on the cover of his second issue, *Kid Colt, Hero of the West* (it became *Kid Colt, Outlaw* with #3).

Kid Colt was born Blaine Colt and his father was killed in a gunfight that Blaine thought was anything but fair. Until then, Blaine Colt had walked away from people calling him out, to his father's shame. In reality, the Kid held off because he really was faster than others were but his hot temper would often get him into trouble. With his father's death, he slapped leather with the killer and won.

Like so many others of the Marvel Western heroes, Colt rode throughout the West like a modern knight, sans armor, helping people in distress. And if sheer numbers tell the story, Kid Colt was more popular than the Two-Gun Kid and Rawhide Kid. His last issue was #229, as opposed to *Rawhide Kid* ending with #151 and the *Two-Gun Kid* finishing up with #136. Plus, he was the only one of the three to have three *Giant-Size* special issues. (Rawhide Kid had one *King-Size*. Two-Gun Kid surprisingly never had any, yet it is the Two-Gun Kid that had more adventures after the Western comic dried up at Marvel.)

Kid Colt fought some strange villains during the '60s, some of them being the Western equivalent of the super-villains of the time. But these masters of menace vanished pretty much by the time the '70s came in. One recurring villain was Iron Mask, who bore more than a passing resemblance to Dr., Doom, clad head to foot in armor to protect him from being shot. There was also Doctor Danger, at first a ventriloquist until he became the master of magnetism (sound like anybody you know?), His big weapon—please don't laugh—was a horseshoe-style magnet a little bigger than his hand that he used to attract guns and other things. There was the dangerous Mr. Brown, (really, that was his villainous name), who used hypnotism to stop his opponents from shooting first. But, surely, the silliest of the bunch was the Fat Man.

The Fat Man was an Australian who roamed the Old West, causing the government to tremble because he knew how to use a boomerang. No, it was not a trick boomerang with explosives or anything like that. It was just a boomerang and they called in Kid Colt to bring his evil crime spree to an end. The hero would be so dazed watching this new thing flying in the air that he would just stand there until it came back and knocked the gun from his hand. Colt did finally just shoot the boomerang to pieces, at which point the Fat Man broke into tears and begged for mercy. With supervillains like these, maybe it is with reason that Marvel dropped them.

The Ghost Rider

Then came the famous Ghost Rider, who had appeared in the '50s under the imprint of Magazine Enterprises (ME), with stories in the original by Gardner Fox and art by Dick Ayers. Ayers handled the art chores for the new Ghost Rider at Marvel (with the initial story written by Gary Friedrich and Roy Thomas).

Re-debuting in the first issue (February 1967), the GR garb was assigned to Carter Slade, a schoolteacher. Slade had tried to stop a massacre of a family by white men posing as Indians, but he got shot and left for dead by the murderers. The sole survivor of the family, a boy named Jamie, managed to drag Carter a distance before collapsing. They were found by real Indians and nursed back to health by Flaming Star, a medicine man. Flaming Star took this as an omen that Slade was to become He Who Rides the Night Winds, the Ghost Rider. He equipped him

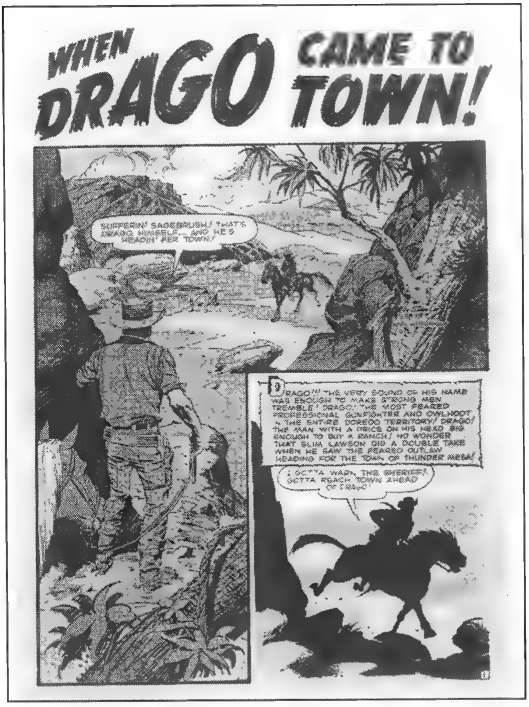
with a glowing cloak and dust that had fallen from a passing comet, a sign of the gods. Slade took to the idea and became the man who could appear and disappear at will, or so fearful criminals believed (he actually made parts of his body seem to vanish by covering the part with the blackness of the inside of the white cloak).

While the masked avenger fought several villains, the most troublesome was the Tarantula, a whip-cracking, Spanish-accented masked man who came close to killing the Rider. The Tarantula turned out to be Clay Riley, the fiancé of the woman that Carter Slade secretly loved.

(Spoiler warning: What follows is an account of the fate of the Ghost Rider.)

The comic came to an end with #7 (November 1967) with stories still to be told, and told they were in *WG* #1-7 (August 1970 to January 1972). Carter Slade as the Ghost Rider met his demise saving the life of his brother Lincoln in *WG* #6. Issue #7 had Jamie temporarily taking over the costume, only to be killed himself, and then Lincoln took over as the Rider… but that wasn't the end of the history of the Ghost Rider by any means, as you will soon see.

Reprints of the first six of the original seven issues of *Ghost Rider* can be found in *Night Rider* #1 (October 1974) through #6 (August 1975), wherein GR was now known as NR to avoid confusion with the motorcycle-riding Ghost Rider, with more name changes to follow. (One last note: the demise of Carter Slade seemed to have been forgotten by July 1975 because Kid Colt and the Slade Night Rider teamed up for *Giant Size Kid Colt* #3.)


WHEN DRAGO CAME TO TOWN!
SUFFERIN' SAGEBRUSH! THAT'S DRAGO HIMSELF... AND HE'S HEADIN' FER TOWN!
"DRAGO!" THE VERY SOUND OF HIS NAME WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE STRONG MEN TREMBLE! DRAGO! THE MOST FEARED PROFESSIONAL GUNFIGHTER AND OUTLAWBOSS IN THE ENTIRE DORADO TERRITORY! DRAGO! THE MAN WITH A PRICE ON HIS HEAD BIG ENOUGH TO BUY A RANCH! NO WONDER THAT SLIM LAWSON DID A DOUBLE TAKE WHEN HE SAW THE FEARED OUTLAW HEADING FOR THE TOWN OF THUNDER MESA!
I GOTTA WARN THE SHERIFF! GOTTA REACH TOWN AHEAD OF DRAGO!

Ringo Kid

With the success of the above heroes, Marvel looked back to the other Western heroes they had published and began reprinting them like mad.

The Ringo Kid starred in his own title, *Ringo Kid Western*, from 1954 through 1957. He was a wanted adventurer who was born to a white trial attorney and a Comanche princess. Ringo traveled from town to town helping people, but he was never far from the law who were on his heels. When he needed help, his father and his Indian blood brother Dull Knife would be there.

The reprint series began for Marvel with #1 in January 1970 and ran for a total of 30 issues (ending in 1976, with a 2-year gap between #23 and #24.). One of the more neglected Western series, Ringo Kid had wonderful art by Joe Maneely, a prolific comic artist of Atlas during the '50s.

Outlaw Kid

The Outlaw Kid was secretly Lance Temple, who ran a farm with his father. An encounter with an outlaw gang left his father blinded for life. Because it was violence that caused his handicap, the old man made his son swear to never take part of any violent action. Lance hated the thought of defying his father's request, so he took up the mask of the Outlaw Kid.

The Outlaw Kid (not to be confused with Kid Colt, Outlaw) first appeared in his own comic back in 1954 and ran through #19 (September 1957). While many of the comics of the period had good artists (including the talents of John Severin and others), *OK* was blessed with the talented line work of the great Doug Wildey. Wildey was a master at showing realism, and his Westerns were among his best work.

Marvel's reprint series of *The Outlaw Kid*, with muddy reproduction of Wildey's great art, began in August 1970. Along the way to its conclusion with #30 in 1975, several issues of new stories were created for a modern audience, but not featuring the art of Wildey, unfortunately. One of the last of the new issues featured the return of a bounty hunter called Gunhawk, now renamed Bounty-Hawk, obviously to not confuse readers with the Gunhawks.

One of the many excellent and sometimes obscure backup stories found in Marvel Westerns was drawn by EC legend Al Williamson… and was reprinted in *Kid Colt Outlaw* #172

Black Rider

The Black Rider was a mystery to the people he helped. Who could this dynamic man clad all in black and drop down mask be? Thundering guns and quick wits never gave them the clue to the fact he was really their kind friend, Doc Masters. The origins of this man in black differed slightly at times. In his first

MATT SLADE,
GUNFIGHTER
1,000 REWARD
MATT SLADE, GUNFIGHTER OUTLAW DEALS WITH KILLER KID ONE OF THE MANY TALES THAT CIRCLED HIS NAME IN VIOLENCE WAS TRUE? OF ONLY ONE THING WERE WE SURE THAT HE WAS THE SUPREME GUNMAN, A CROSSDRAW WIZARD WITH TWO COLTS. THEN THE MEMOIRS OF GOVERNOR ANSON CLINTON WERE FOUND AND THROUGH THEM WE FOUND THE TRUE MAN! ON THESE PAGES YOU WILL FIND THE REAL STORY OF MATT SLADE, GUNFIGHTER

A terrific example of Joe Maneely's wonderful Matt Slade western art was reprinted in *Western Gunfighters* #12

appearance in *All Western Winners* #2 (Winter 1948), Mathew Masters was a young owlhoot named the Cactus Kid. By wiping out a bunch of bad guys, he was given a pardon by the Governor of the State. Masters then said he had had enough of killing and wanted to help people by becoming a doctor, which the Governor arranged. In the later Kirby-handled revival of the character for *The Black Rider Rides Again!* (September 1957), Masters was another hero who started his life off wrong by seeing his parents murdered. The young man tracked down the man responsible and killed him. The court gave him leniency, and the judge took him under his wing to avoid a life of crime and put him through medical school. In both cases, Masters tried to avoid any more violence but had to take up guns again when friends' lives were threatened.

The initial run of Black Rider was quite healthy, in *All Western Winners* which changed its name with #5 to *Western Winners*... to *Black Rider* with #8 (Stan Lee disguised himself as the BR for the cover photograph!)... then to *Western Tales of Black Rider* with #28... and finally (whew) with #32 to *Gunsmoke Western* (BR did not appear in #7, and only in a few issues of *GW*). A popular character, he also appeared in backup stories in several issues of *Kid Colt Outlaw, Outlaw Kid, Ringo Kid Western* and *Two-Gun Kid* during the 1940s and 1950s. Reprint life began under the odd change of name to Black Mask in *Western Gunfighters* #3 (December 1970), resumed its correct title in *WG* #8, and continued on from there in *WG* through issue #16. (Much of the art of the original strip was by Syd Shores but *WG* #5 reprints a Kirby BR story, and *WG* #10, 11, and 12 feature reprint the Kirby stories from *Black Rider Rides Again*!) Two other reprints of the man in black can be found in the backup pages of *KCO* #143 and *TGK* #117.

Apache Kid

The Apache Kid was born to a white mother but raised by an Indian step father who was an Apache chief, Red Hawk. The Kid was a deadly shot and a great hand-to-hand fighter, but his focus was on keeping the peace between white men and his Indian family. One way he did this was by spending time away from the reservation in the guise of a frontier scout and cowboy named Aloysius Kare.

One of the flaws in the series was the Kid's unbelievable ability to change clothes from head to foot even though tied to a tree or whatever the circumstances in order to switch identities. One issue even had him being held by someone and when the person looked away for a few moments (without losing their hold on him), he would completely change so the person turned back to find by this new person. It was a gimmick used in practically every story.

AK made his debut in December 1950 in *Apache Kid* #53, continuing the numbering from *Reno Browne, Hollywood's Greatest Cowgirl*. Issues following this would start with #2 and the series ran through #19, ending in April 1956, with an almost three-year gap between #10 and #11. The Kid also appeared in various issues of *Wild Western* and *Two-Gun Western* during the '50s. Reprints can be found in WG #2 (October 1970) through #33 (November 1975).

Western Kid

Tex Dawson, the Western Kid, wandered the West with his dog and horse with *The Western Kid* #1 (December 1954) and continued through #17 (August 1957). During the trip, the three would face dangers together with an almost telepathic kinship. While the adventures were basically lighthearted, the strip did give us the chance to see the early work of John Romita, Sr.

For the Marvel reprints, the company called him the Western Kid and also Gun-slinger, with stories appearing in a number of issues of *WG*, plus two of his own books, *The Western Kid* #1-5 (December 1971-August 1972), and *Tex Dawson, Gun-Slinger* for #1 (January 1973) and *Gunslinger* for #2 and 3.

Kid Slade

Matt Slade, AKA Kid Slade, first appeared in *Matt Slade Gunfighter* #1 in May 1956 (the title and character name

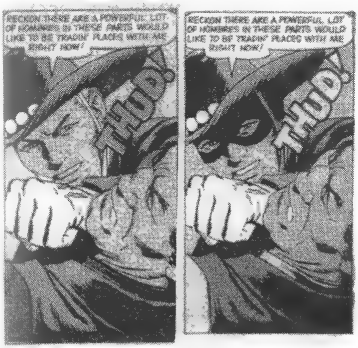
changed to *Kid Slade Gunfighter* with the fifth issue and came to an end with #8 in July 1957), with art by the great Joe Maneely. As a youth, Slade saw his father murdered by outlaws and that day began the practice that would make him one of the greatest gunfighters in the West. (Every Marvel hero seemed to be the greatest gunfighter of them all, with Matt's notoriety being the master of the crossdraw—right hand to left gun, left hand to right gun.)

Matt Slade's wild ride had him accused unjustly for bank robbery and train holdups, and kept him on the run with guns blazing. When he saved the life of the daughter of the Governor, he was not only granted a pardon, he was also appointed undercover marshal for the state. His first assignment was to infiltrate the infamous Hole-in-the-Wall-Gang, and it was through this changing from the outlaw trail to that of the law that Matt encountered and arrested the man who murdered Slade's father.

The stories were never really great, but the art is worth a look. Reprints of Matt Slade/Kid Slade can be found in *WG* # 10 (July 1972) through #15 (May 1973), and in *MMW* # 25 (July 1973) to #42, and 44 (March 1976).

Wyatt Earp

Wyatt Earp's stories were purportedly based on "true tales of the West's most famous peace officer." The series began with #1 in November 1955 and continued on through #29 in June 1960. Twelve years would go by before the 30th issue surfaced in October of 1972 from Marvel, and then lasted for only five issues of reprints, plus a few reprint stories in various other titles.


RECKON THERE ARE A POWERFUL LOT OF HOMBRES IN THESE PARTS WOULD LIKE TO BE TRADIN' PLACES WITH ME RIGHT NOW!
THUD!
RECKON THERE ARE A POWERFUL LOT OF HOMBRES IN THESE PARTS WOULD LIKE TO BE TRADIN' PLACES WITH ME RIGHT NOW!
THUD!

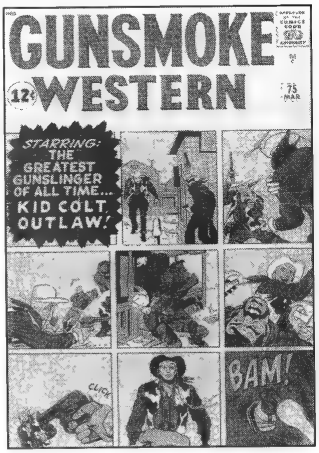
Marvel recycled many of its western stories, including this "old" Two-Gun Kid epic originally published in *TGK* #54. Adding a mask and different clothing "converted" it into a Matt Hawk Two-Gun Kid story used in *Mighty Marvel Western* #15.

Gunsmoke Kid & Billy Buckskin

Two famous *MAD Magazine* artists had their hands in Westerns, too. Marvel reprinted less than a handful of tales of the Gunsmoke Kid, with art by Jack Davis, from various 1950s titles in *Kid Colt* #176 (November 1973), *MMW* #23 (March 1973), and *Western Team Up* #1 (November 1973). *Billy Buckskin*, with art by Mort Drucker, got only one reprinting in *GW* #3 (December 1970).

Backup stories

One thing that must not be neglected were the other stories, the fillers, that were in almost every Western comic. These were usually four-to-five page tales of gunplay and other cowboy action, illustrated by some of the finest artists in the comics industry (among them, Al Williamson, George Woodbridge, Angelo Torres, Gene Colan, and, of course, Jack Kirby). As a matter of fact, some of these were much better written and drawn than those that dealt with the continuing characters.



As late as the 1960s, Marvel was still using multiple panel covers... like the one on *Gunsmoke Western* #75 (Mar 1963)

The new breed of Heroes

Two-Gun Kid, Kid Colt, and the Rawhide Kid were products of a simpler time, a more innocent time. With the coming of the 1970s, however, Marvel introduced a series of darker, more complex riders of the West.

Gunhawk, the modern version (there was one in the '50s, too), made his appearance in *WG* #1. This scar-faced bounty hunter would kill remorselessly and then turn around to help others in need. Mysterious, fearless, and deadly, Gunhawk would later have a significant affect on one of the Marvel Western heroes in *Blaze of Glory*.

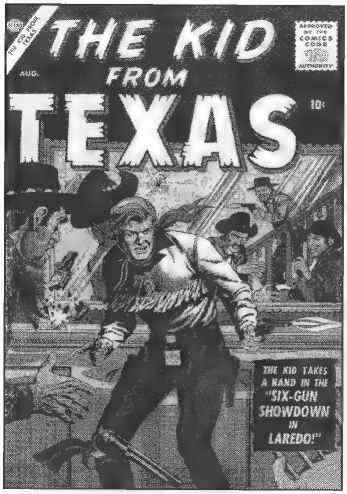
Red Wolf

Red Wolf could be compared in ways to the earlier Apache Kid. On one hand, he was the avenger of the Indians, Owayodata (Red Wolf to the white man), but he was also Johnny Wakely, Indian scout for Fort Rango. Red Wolf, a modern-day version, appeared in *The Avengers* #80 (September 1970), but the Western version didn't debut until appearing in a Marvel tryout comic entitled *Marvel Spotlight* #1 (November 1971). After that, Red Wolf, the Western version, got his own comic with #1

beginning in May 1972. However, by issue #7 (May 1973), he was out and the modern-day version was back in. Art was by Syd Shores with the first story being by Gary Friedrich and the rest by Gardner Fox.

Reno Jones and Kid Cassidy

Reno Jones and Kid Cassidy—The Gunhawks. Reno Jones may be the unluckiest man to have wandered the old West. Accompanied by his friend Kid Cassidy after the Civil War (Jones was black and Cassidy white), he spent much of The Gunhawks' seven-issue run (from October 1972 to October 1973) looking for Rachel, the woman he loved, who had been kidnapped by an Indian brave, and just missing her by a mere moment.



The partnership of Jones and Cassidy ended with the best friends facing off in a gunfight after Cassidy helped Rachel get away from Jones because she didn't want Reno to know she was now the forced squaw of the Indian brave. Cassidy refused to draw but that didn't stop Reno from pulling his gun and shooting. What neither Cassidy nor Reno knew was that the brave who kidnapped her was hiding in the trees and shot at the same time. That was the bullet that killed Cassidy. Running away, Jones was forever tormented by the belief he killed his best friend.

When the last issue ended, Reno was in jail and from his window finally caught sight of a sad Rachel as she rode away in a covered wagon filled with women of easy virtue. And you thought Spider-Man had a rough time with love.

Art for the series was handled at different times by Syd Shores and Dick Ayers, with stories by Gary Friedrich and veteran Gardner Fox.

One of the more obscure Atlas titles, *The Kid from Texas* is coveted by collectors because issues contain great stories drawn by Joe Sinnott

Dakota Kid

The Dakota Kid made his debut in a brand new comic called *Western Team-Up* but, unfortunately, the title never went beyond its first issue (November 1973). Written and drawn by Larry Lieber, the story told how the Rawhide Kid rode into the Dakotas, only to encounter Cliff Morgan, nicknamed ithe Dakota Kid… "a rich rancher's son, who enjoyed a fast rep with a gun." Cliff took Rawhide back to his father's ranch, and through the intercession of the more intelligent, less violent other son, Wayde, Rawhide got a job.

Regrettably, Rawhide's rep preceded him and he was the main suspect when Wayde was murdered by cattle rustlers. The Dakota Kid had saved a saloon girl from being mauled by a vicious gunman and Dakota killed him in a gunfight. He was arrested but escaped from jail when he heard Wayde had been murdered, and chased after Rawhide. Rawhide proved his innocence and the pair found the rustlers, but Cliff couldn't go back home to a father who hated his way of life, and to the law who wanted his capture. Like, the Rawhide Kid, the Dakota Kid was now a wanted outlaw forced to run.

Caleb Hammer

Caleb Hammer, who came on to the Western scene in *Marvel Premiere* #54 (June 1980) was a creation in the Clint Eastwood Man-with-No-Name mode. A man studying for the ministry, Hammer came back to his room one night to find his wife murdered by a crazy gunman. The ministry was left behind as he turned to bounty hunting.

Short runs were given to a variety of new strips in the '70s and they all began in *WG* #1 (August 1970). "The Renegades" told the story of four soldiers of fortune who were sent by Colonel Travis on a secret mission to break out of the Alamo in order to bring back help, but unable to get back in time they went they were branded runaway cowards by people everywhere. The stories were by Mike Friedrich and art was by Tom Sutton. "Tales of Fort Rango" was also by Friedrich and appeared only once under its own name, but it could be seen as a setting for stories involving Red Wolf in his own comic book. Syd Shores handled the art. "The Outcast" was also a one-time only appearance, the story of a half-breed, with art by Barry Smith.

And then came the Avengers

Prior to a small appearance by Kid Colt (that made no sense whatsoever) on the cover of *Fantastic Four Annual* #3 (the wedding issue), the Western gunslingers never appeared in the official Marvel Universe. That all changed with the Rawhide Kid, Kid Colt, Ghost Rider (now called Night Rider) and the Two-Gun Kid galloping towards Thor, Iron Man and other teammates on the cover of *The Avengers* #144 (December 1975).

Travelling through time to find Hawkeye and Kang the Conqueror, the Avengers stopped over in Tombstone, 1873, and their adventure now included the famous horsemen, plus the Ringo Kid. Talk about future shock for the Old West heroes! The tale came to an end with #144 and had one of them, the Two-Gun Kid, deciding to go to the future with the Avengers. By *The Avengers* #175, Two-Gun had enough and needed to get back to the time he knew. This glimpse of the future would leave him affected, though, and be a major part of the Kid's life to come.

The next to be transported back in time was Johnny Blaze,

the modern-day Ghost Rider, to ride alongside the Night Rider in *Ghost Rider* #50 (November 1980). The modern-day Ghost Rider met a modern-day Night Rider in *Ghost Rider* #56 (May 1981). Hamilton Slade, great-great grandson of Lincoln Slade was out in the Nevada Desert and found in a cave a burial jar containing the costume of the Night Rider. Before he knew it, he was possessed by the spirit of Lincoln Slade and forced to put on the costume to right wrongs.

In *West Coast Avengers* #18 (March 1987), several Avengers traveled back in time and again encountered Two-Gun, Rawhide, and the Night Rider, who was this time Lincoln Slade. The issue ended unexpectedly with the Night Rider kidnapping Mockingbird, superhero wife of Hawkeye. Madness had overcome Lincoln Slade and over the next few issues, he fed her a drug to make her fall in love with him. The story arc wrapped in issue #23 (August 1987) with her sanity returned and a need for vengeance. It came when Lincoln Slade's Night Rider hanging onto a cliff by his fingers. Her final words to him were, "Drop dead!"...which he did. The Indians carried his body into a cave, and placed his ashes into the funeral urn, along with the costume, which his great-great grandson would find years later.

The modern-day Night Rider (now called Phantom Rider), Hamilton Slade, appeared several more times in other Marvel titles and in other issues of *West Coast Avengers*, with the most dramatic being issue #41 (February 1989) in which Hamilton Slade was shown to be possessed by not only Lincoln Slade but also Carter Slade. Splitting from his body, Carter and Lincoln fought a mighty battle until only Carter Slade remained and he entered Hamilton's body to join with him in becoming the new Phantom Rider. Even Dr. Strange got into the act by travelling through time to become an old-time cowboy in *Marvel Fanfare* #49 (February 1990). The backup story had a new six-page Two Gun Kid story.

Two-Gun Kid-the Sunset Riders

(Spoiler Warning: this tells of the fate of Matt Hawk) Returning from the future, Matt Hawk/Two-Gun Kid came back rattled. He wasn't the same man he was, because he had discovered in the future the knowledge of the exact day Matt Hawk would die. The first issue of *Two Gun Kid-The Sunset Riders* (November 1995), a two-issue series, told of him a few years after that, how he had married Nancy Carter but that she had died in child birth, that and also how he had to turn his back on the people of Tombstone he had protected for so many years by rescuing a black man from their hanging of him. But that was only the start of a tale that would bring in all the major governments of the Earth at that time. Sunset Riders was a grim telling of a world-weary Two Gun, but thankfully it wouldn't prove to be the last of him that we would see.

THERE'S IRON MASK WITH HIS POWERFUL ABLE ARMOR
HURRICANE A FAST DRAW ARTIST
THE RATTLER AN AMAZING ACROBAT
RED RAVEN, WHO ACTUALLY FLIES WITH A SPECIAL INDIAN COSTUME
DOCTOR DANGER, THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM
AND THE FAT MAN WITH HIS DEADLY BOOMERANG

In this panel from *West Coast Avengers* #18, the Two-Gun Kid (center bottom) tells of the Old West villains the superhero team is up against

Going out with a blaze of glory

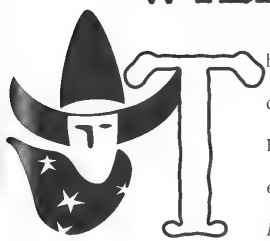
The wrap-up to many a gun-blazing life was shown in the excellent four-issue miniseries *Blaze of Glory* (February to March 2000), subtitled "The Last Ride of the Western Heroes." The legends that we have discussed were apparently just that, legends. This series purported to tell the real story of those heroes and the coming together of the Two-Gun Kid, the Rawhide Kid, Kid Colt, Red Wolf, Reno Jones, Ghost Rider, Gun Hawk, and Caleb Hammer for one last fight for justice. Matt Hawk was "dead" and the Two-Gun Kid had now taken on the identity of Clay Harder, thereby tying together a bit of reverse comics' history. What made this story so worthwhile was not only the realistic look to the heroes (more befitting the West as it really was), but also the wonderful writing and characterizations of each hero. Some were good, some mean, and one was definitely schizophrenic. And most had the chance, as the Two-Gun Kid said, "...to go out in a blaze of glory."

Blaze of Glory ended the way we want all good Westerns to end, with all the good guys teamed up, back to back, fighting to the end and defeating the bad guys. Unfortunately, some die, but their deaths are for the most part glorious ends to glorious careers. And others live to go into the new land where gunplay is a thing of the past and they finally get the chance to live their lives in peace.

A last fitting tribute to those legends was *Gunslingers* #1 (February 2000), a 64-page collection of Two-Gun Kid, Rawhide Kid, Kid Colt and Caleb Hammer stories. More issues would be most welcome as a wonderful reminder of these great heroes of the past, but if they have ridden their last trail, that is okay, too. Their legends live on.

The Two-Gun Kid faced a clad-in-black Panther almost a year before the "modern" Black Panther made his debut in *FF* #52

Buffalo Bill's WILD WEST ANNUALS



The success of the *Buffalo Bill Comics* convinced the publisher, T. V. Boardman and F. W. Woolworth to embark on the production of the *Buffalo Bill Wild West Annual*. Work on the project began in the summer of 1948 and took approximately three months to complete. The man whose job it was to supply the artwork and put the book together was Denis McLoughlin, chief illustrator for Boardman Books.

McLoughlin was extremely fastidious not only with the artwork but also with the historical accuracy of the comic strips and stories, his encyclopedic knowledge of the wild west and that of his brother, Colin, who gathered much of the factual information, was put to good use. Arthur Groom, the juvenile author, was asked to assist in the writing of the text stories.

To produce the artwork, McLoughlin worked 50% up using coloured inks, poster paints, derwent pencil and some airbrush, the resulting artwork was, particularly the covers, nothing short of stunning.

BY JIM KEALY

The initial print run of that first book was 100,000, some of which were produced with blue cotton spines, this fact will be of interest to collectors, very few of these books bearing blue spines

McLoughlin's paintings of Native Americans were so good they sometimes overshadowed other *Buffalo Bill Wild West Annual* graphics. This one, featuring Sitting Bull and his Council of War (1950), is no exception.

surface, far more common is the book bearing the red spine, which is the colour used on all spines in the remainder of the series. The print run on that first book peaked at 250,000. It contained 172 pages, 12 of which were colour plates, 5 with spot colour, printed on art paper. It went on sale in Woolworth's in time for Christmas 1948 and cost five shillings (5/-), it was a resounding success.

The second book, dated 1950, and probably the most common in the series, is even better than the first, McLoughlin had more time to devote to the project and so was able to pull out all the stops, and what a job he did, 192 pages of sheer pleasure.

The high production standards were maintained in books #3, 4, 5, and 6, the only changes being the reduction in pages and the gradual reduction in the number of colour plates.

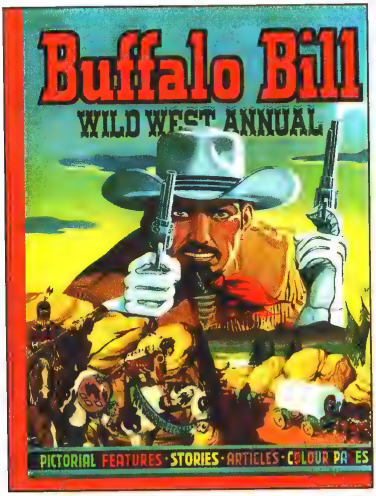
The release of the seventh book brought even more changes. In an effort to reduce production costs, Woolworth's instructed the new publisher, the Popular Press to do away with all the colour plates, a new writer, Rex James, was brought in to replace Arthur Groom, (interestingly Rex James was the pseudonym used by the writer Joan Whitford). Also, rather strangely, taking into account the measures taken to cut costs, a dust-wrapper was introduced, finding this wrapper and those accompanying the remaining six books in the series can prove a very difficult task, as so many were thrown away, additionally that seventh books was printed in Holland.

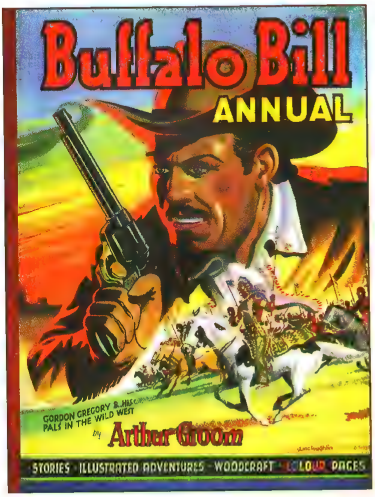
Printing would return to Britain with the next issue, #8. Those last few books in the series are for me shadows of what the book used to be. They were of course still very well illustrated and the factual information on the Old West was second to none, but it seemed that the sparkle had gone out of it.

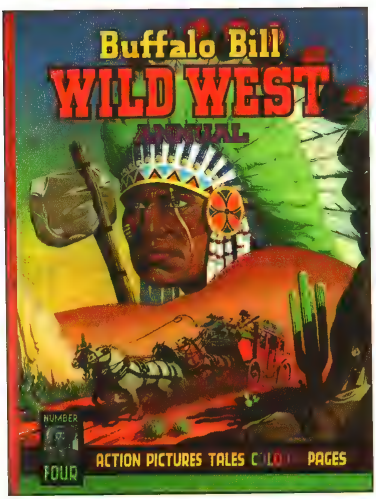
Issue #13, retitled Buffalo Bill's True West Annual was the last in the series and is almost impossible to find.

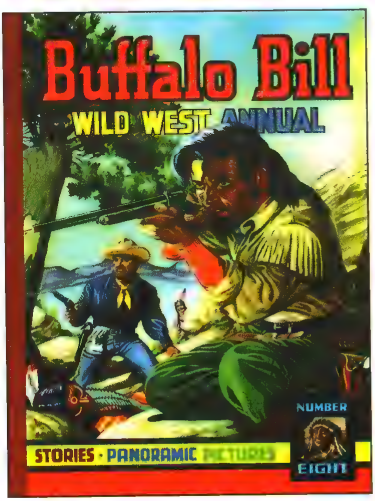
A sad demise to a great set of books and probably Denis McLoughlin's finest work.

COLOR GALLERY




Buffalo Bill
ANNUAL
GORDON GREGORY & HIS PALS IN THE WILD WEST
By Arthur Groom
STORIES · ILLUSTRATED ADVENTURES · WOODCRAFT · COLOUR PAGES





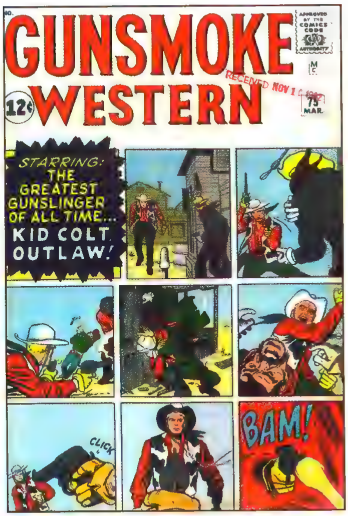
Buffalo Bill Wild West Annual
#3 (1951)
#1 (1949)
#4 (1952)
#8 (1956)

NOTE: All Buffalo Bill Wild West Annuals issued the year previous to their publication date.

IND.
GUNSMOKE WESTERN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
58 MAY
10¢
KID COLT, OUTLAW "A BULLET FOR A BADMAN!"
WYATT EARP "BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY!"
GUN 'IM DOWN, BOYS! WE'RE TAKIN' OVER!
ALSO
TWO-GUN KID "WHEN STORM SMITH STRIKES!"

Gunsmoke Western #58 (May 1960)

All Marvel Western covers courtesy the Greg Pharis collection



GUNSMOKE WESTERN
12¢
73 NOV.
THE KID FINALLY MEETS SOMEONE WHO MAKES GOOD THE BOAST...
"I CAN OUTDRAW KID COLT!!"
...REDBEARD'S RAIDERS STRIKE!
START SHOOTIN', BOYS! LET 'EM KNOW REDBEARD IS HERE!
...AND MANY OTHER WESTERN THRILLS!!

GUNSMOKE WESTERN
12¢
70 MAY
STARRING KID COLT IN.....
"WHEN AN OUTLAW ESCAPES!!"
KEEP MOVING, KID! THIS IS THE END OF THE LINE FOR YOU AT LAST!
THAT'S IT, COLT! KEEP TRYIN' TO BUST LOOSE! ONE MORE MINUTE AND I'LL HAVE ME AN EXCUSE TO GUN YOU DOWN WHERE YOU STAND!!
PLUS OTHER ACTION-PACKED WESTERN THRILLERS!

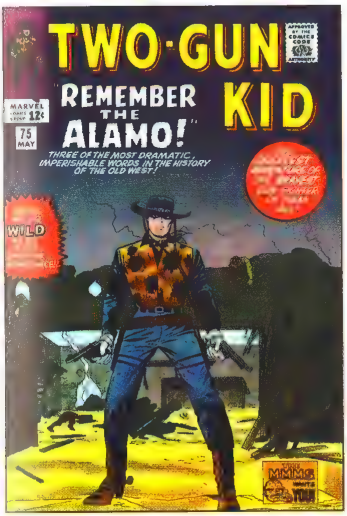
Gunsmoke Western
#64 (May 1961)
#75 (Mar 1963)
#73 (Nov 1962)
#70 (May 1962)

IND.
TWO-GUN KID
12¢
60
NOV.
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MC
WHAT IS THE STRANGE SECRET OF MATT HAWK?
WHY DOES NANCY CARTER DESPISE THE TWO-GUN KID?
CAN THE KID, ALONE, DEFEAT A GANG OF GUNSLINGERS?
HOW DID BEN DANCER CHANGE THE KID'S LIFE?
DESTINED TO BECOME AMERICAS GREATEST WESTERN HERO!

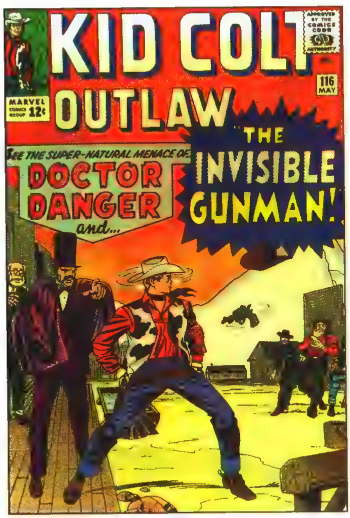
Two-Gun Kid
#60 (Nov 1962)

TWO-GUN KID
12¢
62 MAR
See the Kid at the mercy of Moose Morgan!"
MATT HAWK, THIS IS YOUR FINISH! NOTHIN' CAN SAVE YA NOW!
I WOULDN'T BET ON THAT, MOOSE!
IF ONLY THE TWO-GUN KID WERE HERE!

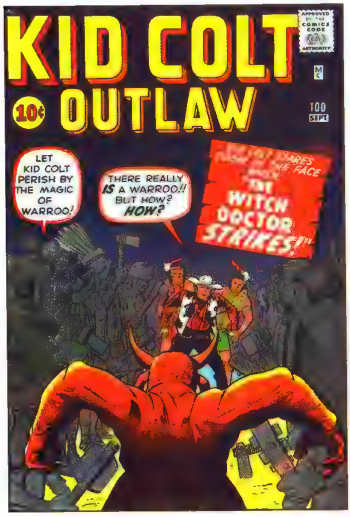
TWO-GUN KID
12¢
63 MAY
the GUNS OF WILD BILL TAGGERT!
STAY OUT OF MY WAY, TENDERFOOT!
HAW! LOOK AT THE WEANLING WHIMPER!
I WAS HOPIN' I COULD HOLD MY TEMPER UNTIL I CHANGED DUDS!
THE TWO-GUN KID!!
HOWDY, HOMBRE! I HEAR TELL YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR A FIGHT!
THE BRONC-BUSTER!" "THE LAWMAN COMETH!"


TWO-GUN KID
REMEMBER THE ALAMO!"
MARVEL 12¢
75 MAY
THREE OF THE MOST DRAMATIC, IMPERISHABLE WORDS IN THE HISTORY OF THE OLD WEST!
WILD

Two-Gun Kid
#62 (Mar 1963)
#63 (May 1963)
#75 (May 1965)
#77 (Sep 1965)



KID COLT
OUTLAW
12¢
I KEEP FIRING, BUT MY BULLETS DON'T STOP HIM! HOW CAN I SAVE THE TOWN—AND MYSELF—FROM IRON MASK??
KID COLT IS TRAPPED BY THE MOST DANGEROUS FOE HE HAS EVER FACED!! THE UNCANNY
IRON MASK!



KID COLT
OUTLAW
MARVEL
12¢
111
JULY
THIS IS YOUR FINISH, KID!
I WARNED YOU THAT YOU'D NEVER ESCAPE FROM...
"SAM HAWK, THE MAN-HUNTER!"
THIS IS ONLY A SMALL SAMPLE OF THE HEART-POUNDING ACTION AND THRILLS YOU WILL FIND IN THE PAGES OF THE FEATURE-LENGTH KID COLT SAGA IN THIS GREAT ISSUE!

Kid Colt Outlaw
#116 (May 1964)
#110 (May 1963)
#100 (Sep 1961)
#111 (Jul 1963)

Kid Colt Outlaw
#107 (Nov 1962)

RAWHIDE KID
35 AUG.
DON'T MISS THE ACTION WHEN "THE RAVEN STRIKES!"
MARVEL COMICS GROUP PRESENTS THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS!
"THE RAVEN!"
WILL THIS UNKNOWN MARAUDER FINALLY END THE BLAZING CAREER OF THE RAWHIDE KID?

RAWHIDE KID
37 DEC
NEVER HAS THE KID KNOWN AN ENEMY AS DANGEROUS AS "THE RATTLER!"
DON'T DO IT, KID!! RUN FOR YOUR LIFE! NOBODY CAN BEAT... THE RATTLER!
BANG!

Rawhide Kid
#47 (Aug 1965)
#35 (Aug 1963)
#37 (Dec 1963)
#41 (Aug 1964)

ROLLING, ROLLING, ROLLING RAWHIDE KID!

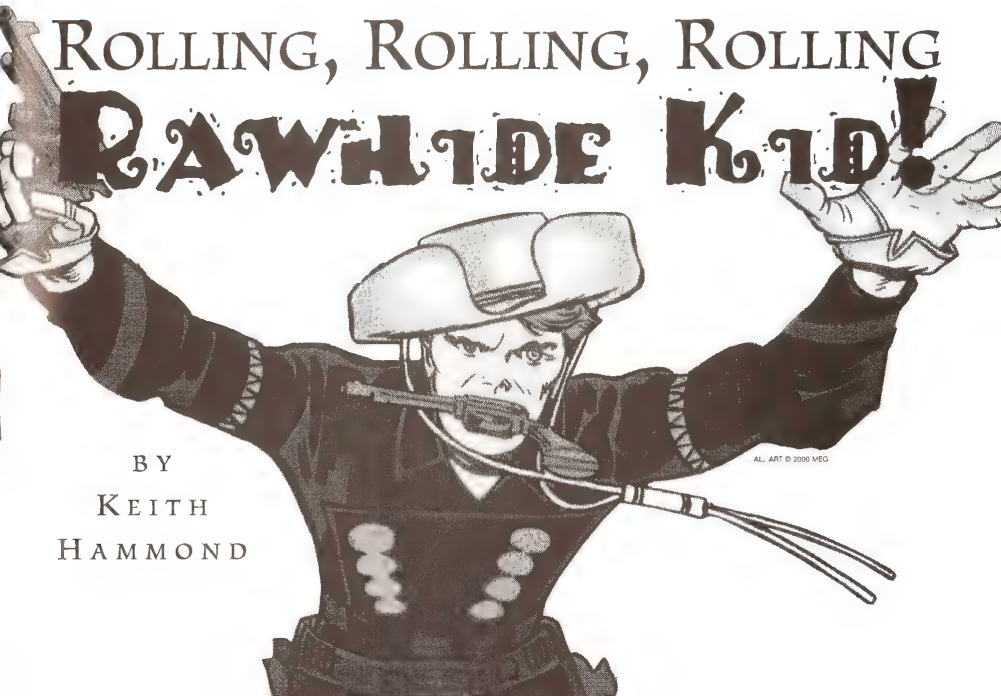
BY KEITH HAMMOND

A few issues back in *Comic Book Marketplace*, some of the monthly reporters of comic book sales/prices made notice of some increases in sales for Marvel Comics westerns, particularly early issues of the Rawhide Kid revival. I confess, that I am one of those people who paid three figures on eBay for a good copy of the *Rawhide Kid* #17. But why, you may ask? Well, that is an explanation that involves some mighty fine comics indeed.

First, *Rawhide Kid* #17-32 is a fantastic run of comics. All are written by Stan Lee with Rawhide Kid art by the late, great Jack Kirby. (Each issue has a five-page Western story not involving the Rawhide Kid.) Dick Ayers is credited with the inking in the bulk of these stories. That's right —the same people responsible for such legendary work as the Fantastic Four, Thor, X-Men and others, are the very same gentlemen responsible for the *Rawhide Kid* issues #17-32. In many of these stories, you can see the same synergy that will lead to the Marvel Age of Comics. This fabulous run of books begins with #17 in August, 1960 (many months before *Fantastic Four* #1) and ends at #32 in February, 1963 (about six months prior to the debuts of *Avengers* #1 and *X-Men* #1). Just as the pre-hero stories in *Tales of Suspense, Strange Tales*, et. al, are a wealth of fun by Lee, Kirby, Ayers and other prominent future Marvel bullpenners, these stories also (yes, even though they are Westerns) are rare examples of the quality work these people were capable of, as well as just being plain fun.

Second, these can be some rare books to find. Scan the ads in publications like *CBM*, *CBG*, and others. Pull up eBay listings. Scour the bins at comic book conventions. These early Marvel Westerns are not easy to locate, not by a long shot. It's much easier to find Marvel hero books from the same time period. As such, when the opportunity came to get a *Rawhide Kid* #17 on eBay, and I knew the very reputable seller (Thanks, John Hauser!), it was worth $180 to get my copy. Being the first new issue of the revival, I felt like I'd bought a *Fantastic Four* #1 or *Hulk* #1. Thanks to the internet, filling a run of Marvel Westerns is a lot easier and quicker than ever.

Now, as to the comics… what great stories they are! First, the *Rawhide Kid* title started with issue number one in March, 1955. He was a very different character at this time. He wore a rawhide jacket, blue jeans, and a white hat (that renowned symbol of the Western good guy). He looked somewhat similar to Johnny Thunder from DC, though the Kid had fiery red hair. The original Rawhide Kid was a very stable, responsible man with a ranch and a kid sidekick named Randy (he needed rescuing quite often—Lois Lane syndrome). Dick Ayers, among others, did the artwork. See issue #17 of *Mighty Marvel Western* for a typical example of the stories, if you cannot afford those pricey and rare originals. This version of the Rawhide Kid ran until issue #16 in September, 1957. This is right around that dreaded time in Atlas/Marvel history when Stan Lee laid off almost all the staff, and drastically reduced the number of published titles. The Rawhide Kid was likely a victim of the times and, alas, rode off into the sunset.



ALL ART © 2006 MEG

Will the real Jesse James... please stand up?

One of Stan Lee's neater ideas in the Marvel Westerns was to have them meet up with authentic Western characters. Indeed, Atlas/Marvel published *Wyatt Earp*, for example, based on the old West lawman (though more resembling popular media interpretations of the character than the authentic man). Kid Colt met up with John Wesley Hardin (*Kid Colt, Outlaw* #126). The Rawhide Kid faced down Doc Holliday (*Rawhide Kid* #46). And, the Two-Gun Kid was the man who trained Billy the Kid how to shoot (a little-known "fact" revealed in *Two-Gun Kid* #80—didn't hear that in school, did you?). But, they all met up with Jesse James! That legendary owlhoot was very different from appearance to appearance, though.

In "The Kid Meets Jesse James!" (from *Kid Colt, Outlaw* #82, January, 1959), Kid Colt is cornered in a saloon by the locals. To his aid comes a dapper looking gentleman, neat black hair and small mustache, wearing a nice, black hat, black vest and tie. His "steel-fingered hands were never more than a few inches from his low-slung holsters." He faced those men down with "his cold, unblinking eyes" and helped the Kid escape! This Jesse James was a hounded man... trying to go straight, but the law wouldn't let him! James stated he had been blamed for every crime imaginable. Kid Colt remarked on how similar they were. Ah, but upon the arrival of the U.S. Army, the differences came to the surface! When cornered, Blaine Colt refused to fire on lawmen doing their duty. Not Jesse James! When arguments failed, James knocked out the Kid and began blasting away at the soldiers! The Kid quickly awoke though, and disarmed James. Before he could decide what to do, a surprise twister came out of the sky. Jesse James escaped in the confusion, leaving Kid Colt to wonder "Was Jesse James really as bad as they say—or the victim of rumors and lies! I suppose no one will ever know!" A nice story by Stan Lee and Jack Keller.

Well, Kid Colt made up his mind by Kid Colt, Outlaw #101 (November, 1961). In "When the Outlaws Strike!," the Kid stumbled into a town called Purgatory, where the evil Johnny Ringo was the sheriff, noted badman Drago Dalton was the mayor, and Jesse James was the town judge! This Jesse James was a sinister looking man with a hawk-like nose and hair parted down the middle. No sympathy this time, Kid Colt shot it out with Jesse James and the other "most dangerous owlhoots in the West!" The attitude was different... this time Jesse James was just another bad guy. Jack Keller draw Jesse differently this time, possibly based on the cover picture by Jack Kirby.

Jesse James next appeared in *Rawhide Kid* #33 (neat cover by Jack Kirby). In "The Guns of Jesse James.," Stan Lee and veteran EC-artist, Jack Davis, took a turn at Jesse. After a confrontation with lawmen, the Rawhide Kid decided to act like an owlhoot and took off for the badlands, where every bad man in the West was holed up! Rawhide Kid captured Jesse's henchmen and took them to Mr. James offering to partner with the legendary outlaw. This Jesse James had bushy brown hair and mustache. He was tall and thin and wore a purple suit like the Joker. He convinced the Kid he was a modern day Robin Hood, robbing from the rich to aid the poor. During a robbery, though, Jesse James brutalized an elderly man, revealing his true colors. The Rawhide Kid beat him good with his fists, but Jesse pulled a hidden gun on the Kid! That would have been the last issue had not the elderly man saved from Jesse by the Rawhide Kid managed to disarm Jesse James! With the sheriff's impending arrival, both Jesse James and the Rawhide Kid got away to fight another day!

That other day for Mr. James was in *Two-Gun Kid* #71 (September, 1964). In "Showdown with Jesse James!," Stan Lee and Dick Ayers told the tale of how Jesse James hankered to gun down the Two-Gun Kid, who "folks are beginning to think that he's a bigger man than I am." This Jesse James was a large, bulky man, with stringy brown hair, unshaven, sunken eyes and smoking a cigar. He used his brother, Frank James, to capture Matt Hawk to lure the Two-Gun Kid into a trap. Of course, Matt Hawk was the Two-Gun Kid! Matt's friend, Boom-Boom, followed and freed him. During the inevitable confrontation, the Kid was disarmed and Jesse planned to shoot him down and then claim it was a fair fight. A bullet flashed, and Jesse was disarmed. The gunman was Frank James! Frank explained "You shame me, Jesse! You, my own brother—shame me!" As the Two-Gun Kid put it "As for you, Jesse—History will exaggerate the truth about you—people will make a legend of you! But all of us—we who are here today—will always know the truth about you!" Powerful stuff!

Jesse James returned to face the Two-Gun Kid again in *Two-Gun Kid* #78 (November, 1965) titled "The Revenge of Jesse James." During a train robbery, Matt Hawk is approached by one of the gangsters who turns out to be Jesse James. To show what a weak man Jesse is, Matt Hawk soundly thrashes him on that train in front of all the passengers! Later on in the issue, in his Two-Gun Kid identity, Matt Hawk not only beats the tar out of Jesse James, he shoots his pants loose and makes him dance in front of some kids who had idolized the notorious outlaw! As the Kid said "You (Jesse) told the school children that you were a real brave hombre—and that I was a coward! Well, now we'll show them the truth!" This story was edited by Stan Lee, written by brother Larry Lieber and drawn by Dick Ayers (so the pictorial version of Jesse James looks very similar to Ayers' work from *Two-Gun Kid* #71).

This fun string of books gives several neat gems. First, we get to see Jesse James as interpreted by great artists like Jack Keller, Jack Kirby, Jack Davis, and Dick Ayers (we ran out of Jacks!). Terrific, even legendary artists all! Second, the stories by Stan Lee are interesting and show his changing of thinking, as Jesse James moved from a possibly sympathetic legend in *Kid Colt, Outlaw* #82, to regular bad guy in *Kid Colt, Outlaw* #101 and *Rawhide Kid* #33, to lowest of the low in *Two-Gun Kid* #71 and #78 (one wonders if the embarrassment of Jesse James in *TGK* #78 was not a message to modern day youngsters who idolized the outlaw). Lastly, these are just plain fun, doggonit! ■

Fast forward to August, 1960. Though Stan Lee still had a limited number of titles he could publish, he was still putting out new books. Legend has it that Lee would have to cancel an existing title to make room for a new comic book, as he could only publish a limited number of books per month. I can't say for certain, but it looks like the *Wyatt Earp* book may have been the victim, ending with issue #29 in June, 1960. Two months later (just right for a bi-monthly book), the new *Rawhide Kid* was published. Why *Wyatt Earp* was cancelled may be lost to history. This had been a fairly popular feature running in his own book and a regular spot in a Western anthology comic called *Gunsmoke Western*, also starring Kid Colt. One can speculate that from past interviews Stan Lee has said he always got the best sales from Westerns with "Kid" in the title. So, logically replace *Wyatt Earp* with a "Kid" character.

With the release of the Marvel mini-series *Blaze of Glory* in 1999, some vocal fans complained about the treatment of the main characters. John Ostrander had said he was going to treat characters like the Two-Gun Kid, Kid Colt, and, yes, the Rawhide Kid as more realistic, claiming their prior adventures recorded in past Marvel Westerns had been liberal fantasy interpretations of the "real" characters (as could be found in "penny dreadfuls" of the late 1800s). Fans complained about ignoring the rich history of the characters and betraying the works of Lee, Kirby, Ayers, Leiber, and others. Alas, there is no leg to stand on as this precedent had been set by none other than Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. With the August, 1960, revival of the Rawhide Kid, the old character was ignored in favor of the new interpretation. The cover to *Rawhide Kid* #17 portrayed a drifting outlaw wearing all black. He was firing one gun while skillfully twirling another. No sidekick was in sight. His only nod to the old Rawhide Kid was the red hair and ever-present white hat.

In the origin story in *Rawhide Kid* #17, we were introduced to a young man named Johnny Bart. He lived with his Uncle Ben, until he was bitten by a radioactive gunslinger, and... whoops... wrong Uncle Ben! This Uncle Ben, full name Ben Bart, was an ex-Texas Ranger living in Rawhide, Texas, who adopted young Johnny Bart. Ben taught Johnny all the necessary tricks of the Old West—riding, roping, hunting, and, most importantly, gunmanship. One day while Johnny Bart was in town, Ben Bart was shot down by Hawk Brown, as his partner, Spade, distracted Ben during the showdown. Brown thought he would make his reputation by outdrawing the well-known lawman. But, eighteen year old Johnny Bart swore vengeance!

He tracked the pair down and confronted them in the saloon in Rawhide, Texas. He let Hawk Brown draw his guns first, so that Johnny could show how fast he was by drawing, aiming, and firing before Brown could squeeze the triggers of his drawn pistols! Behind his back, he twirled his guns, firing and shooting the guns out of the hands of Spade as he was about to bushwhack Johnny. He turned the duo over to the law, and vowed to roam the West fighting evil men. And so was born the Rawhide Kid (named after the city)!

The last story in *Rawhide Kid* #17, "When the Rawhide Kid Turned Outlaw!," told the story of how Johnny Bart became a wanted man. The Kid was assisting a rancher in solving a mystery of who was rustling his cattle. Upon catching the crook named Barker, Barker began to draw on the Kid. Naturally, the Rawhide Kid drew faster, shooting and wounding the criminal. From the point of view of the approaching sheriff, all he could see was the Rawhide Kid drawing and firing on the man. Rather than take time to sort it out, the Rawhide Kid ran for it (well, he was on horseback, but you get the idea). From that moment on, there was a price on his head and lawmen dogging his trail! Well, why not, because it had obviously worked for Kid Colt, Outlaw, one of Marvel's longest running features.

From that point on, Lee, Kirby, and Ayers took fans on a long, wild ride! The Kid faced rannies like Dead-Eye Dawson, Wolf Waco, Blackjack Bordon, the Barker Brothers, Jasker Jelko, and the Bounty Hunter! The last story in these issues often featured a lighter tale of the Rawhide Kid. Examples are "Riot in Railtown" from *Rawhide Kid* #30, where the Kid does some literal butt-kicking, and "The Defeat of the Rawhide Kid!" from *RK* #20, where the Kid throws a fight to help a youngster learn the outlaw life is not as glamorous as some thought (Another story "The Fallen Hero!" from *RK* #29 is very similar). The Kid cares for kids and widows ("Gunman's Gamble" in *RK* #24) showing his heart of gold, beneath the rough exterior. But, he's not above putting bullies in their place, despite his diminutive size (see *Rawhide Kid* #27, among others).

NAME THAT MARVEL HORSE!
A Matching Game

Match the Marvel cowboy with his horse:

1. Kid Colt	a. Nightwind
2. Rawhide Kid	b. Thunder
3. Two-Gun Kid	c. Whirlwind
4. Outlaw Kid	d. Thunder
5. Ghost Rider	e. Steel
6. Tex Dawson	f. Banshee

(Two are named Thunder)

Like other Marvel westerns (and this does seem unique to Marvel), the Rawhide Kid faced his share of "super-villains." Perhaps, because of the success of the Marvel heroes, Kid Colt, Two-Gun Kid, and the Rawhide Kid began to face old West versions of super-villains. The Kid faced "The Bat" in *RK* #25, a bank robber dressed like Zorro, but with a black hood that covered his full face. In issue #26, he faced a slick pickpocket who convinced others that he was the "Bullet-Proof Man."

Perhaps, most infamous of all was the Living Totem in *RK* #22. The Living Totem was a visitor from another world who looked like a walking totem pole ("No doubt what inspired the Indians to create totem poles" thought the Kid). He wanted to conquer the world, but the Rawhide Kid stopped him, by blinding him with gunsmoke(?) and then pushing him off a cliff (This sort of tactic proved effective for the Road Runner when facing Wile E. Coyote, also). This classic is reprinted in *Marvel's Gunslingers Special* published in 1999, and *Mighty Marvel Western* #3. It appears all the world like Stan Lee decided to combine his two best selling genres, monsters and westerns, and see what happened. Had Millie the Model been involved, Stan could have combined all three genres published by Marvel at the time. Too bad! You really have to read this bizarre tale if you haven't already! Later on, the Kid faced other costumed characters like the Raven (#35), the Ape (#36), the Rattler (#37), and the Red Raven (#38). Obviously, it's not like reading a textbook on the Old West, but suspend your disbelief, and these can be quite fun stories.

Also of note is that *Rawhide Kid* #17-32 have backup strips by Stan Lee and another artist (usually Heck or Reinman). For my money, the best of the group is "The Judge" from *Rawhide Kid* #32. It was often reprinted, and is a fun little tale of how an old judge tamed a western town, bringing in some badly needed law and order (Hint: He packed heat under

Answers:
Kid Colt's horse is Steel
Rawhide Kid's horse is Nightwind
Two-Gun Kid's horse is Thunder
Outlaw Kid's horse is Thunder
Ghost Rider's horse is Banshee
Tex Dawson's horse is Whirlwind

the robe!). It's drawn by Al Hartley of Patsy Walker fame, and works surprisingly well for a teen humor artist. It's too bad he didn't draw more Westerns.

After #32, the next trio of Rawhide Kid issues were drawn by Jack Davis, the famed EC artist: Dick Ayers did a few after that, before Larry Lieber began a long and enjoyable run as writer-artist. These "later issues" deserve an article to themselves. But, the Lee, Kirby and Ayers magic is something to behold. To sample these great stories, the *Rawhide Kid Special* published in September, 1971, is a great place to start. It reprints the bulk of the Rawhide Kid stories from *Rawhide Kid* #19, 28, and 29. The other issues are reprinted in other places like *Mighty Marvel Western*, or later issues of *Rawhide Kid* from #116-151, when the magazine became all reprint material. They are worth looking for... buying... and savoring. It's early Marvel magic that is all too rarely experienced anymore.

With *Rawhide Kid* #151 (March 1979) the book was cancelled and the Rawhide Kid rode off into the sunset and into comic book history. With movies like Star Wars, people who had once been entertained by the Western frontier became more interested in the final frontier. The comic book Western became a dying genre. But some of us lucky enough to have these early masterpieces will never forget the cry from *Rawhide Kid* #17—"Beware! The Rawhide Kid!!"

INDIAN CHIEF!

BY GREGORY WASKO

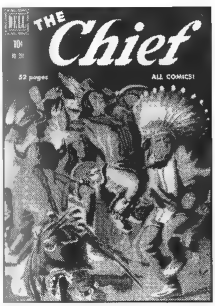
"For the first time authentic stories, portraying the life and customs of the American Indian, before the coming of the White Man" proclaimed the back cover of *Four Color* #290 (August 1950), the premier issue of *The Chief*. The next issue, #2 (February 1951) followed six months later, then with the third issue (July/September 1951) the title was changed to *Indian Chief*- publishing quarterly for the rest of the run. Implicit in the series is respect for the American Indian and his culture... something that wasn't common at the time. *Indian Chief* portrayed the adventures of White Eagle, chief of the Sioux, how he became chief, his struggle with adversity, and how he came to be great. The hallmark of the title was storytelling and heroism, both delivered in abundance by some of the finest writers in comics.

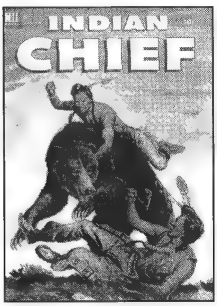
Most of the early stories were probably written by Gaylord Dubois who wrote extensively for Western Publishing. Several themes were explored but most of the stories dealt with combat... everything from minor skirmishes to tribal battles to total war. These action-laden plots gave the writers opportunity to produce some dramatic and appealing tales. Some of the better ones were "Sacrifice to the Morning Star" (#7 July/September 1952), "The Haunted Pueblo" and "The Trapper" (#9 January-March 1953), "Arrows of Fire" and "War Trail" (#10 April/June 1953), and "Son of the Chief" (#11 July/September 1953).

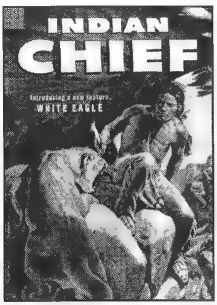
Issue #12 (October/December 1953) introduced the character White Eagle who went on to become the central figure in the comic. The story "White Eagle" told of his ascendancy to the leadership of the Sioux upon the death of his father. Thereafter the young chief struggled with consolidating his power, proving his strength and leadership in battle, and embarking on some pretty far flung adventures. "White Eagle and Danger in the North" (#14 April/June 1954) and "White Eagle and the Traitors" (#15 July/September 1954) is a two-part saga which chronicled White Eagle's ultimate victory over nefarious elements within his own tribe thus solidifying his pre-eminence among the Sioux. Further narratives reinforced the character of White Eagle as a person possessed of wisdom, kindness, empathy, justice, bravery and heroism- one of the great chiefs.

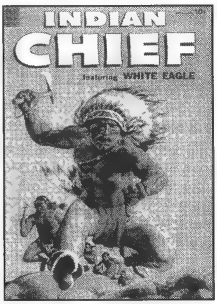
After having filled in on #5, Paul S. Newman took over the writing duties for *Indian Chief* with issue #16 (September-November 1954). Newman was Western Publishing's most prolific author scripting a vast number of stories including most of the *Lone Ranger* and *Turok Son of Stone*. Paul's presence was felt immediately as the White Eagle feature was expanded from 16 pages to 22. The extra space allowed more room for plot and character development and Newman used it to the fullest. He wove true Indian customs and legends into plot foundation and storylines using six major books on Indian anthropology and lore. In his copy of the Museum of Natural History's *Indians of the Plains* (1948) there is still underlining where plot incidents were used. Such things as the Iroquois' False Face Society, the potlatch ceremony of the Nootkas, the Pawnee Morning Star sacrifice, bull boats of the Mandans, the Dakota's system of grading war deeds and how visions were obtained all found their way into the pages of *Indian Chief*. He used different tribes and their customs, as in "Quest of the Chinook Chief" (#23, July/September 1956) where the custom of the Chinook tribe to send off their dead in burial canoes was used by White Eagle to stage a surprise attack against the enemy.

Exotic settings and locales were common in Newman's stories providing visual variety like Yellowstone Park with its geysers and bubbling mud pots in "Land of the Smokes" (#24 October/December 1956). In that story White Eagle searches for the source of a strange new incredibly strong black stone









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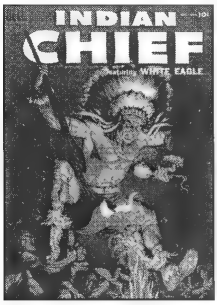
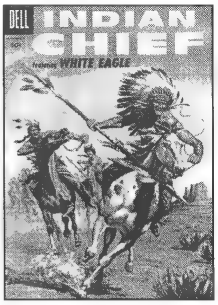
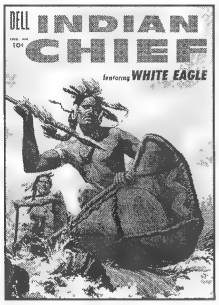
Indian Chief

for arrowheads and finds it at Yellowstone where as a 10-year-old tourist little Paul S. Newman bought an obsidian arrowhead which he owned right up until hi death has to this day. Some missions took White Eagle far afield as in "Land of the Aztecs" (#20 October/December 1955) and "Secret of the Toltecs" (#27 July/September 1957). Historical actuality sometimes gave way like when the Vikings just happened to sail up the lake one day despite the Sioux living on the western plains ("The Pale Strangers" #26 April/June 1957). All of the stories were well done especially, along with the aforementioned, "The Sealed Cave" (#25 January/March 1957), "Prey of the Pawnees" (#28 October/December 1957, this title is also incorrectly shown on the cover of the next issue, #29 January/March 1958), "Monster of the Deep (#30 April/June 1958), "Secret of the Yellowknives" (#31 July-September 1958) and "The Sea Raiders" (#32 October/December 1958).

In "Secret of the Toltecs" a new character was introduced, Young Bow, who was rather like Andar from *Turok Son of Stone*. Young Bow was strong, youthful, brash, and always itching for a fight. He was kind of a macho







Previous page: Four Color #290 (Aug 1950), Indian Chief #9 (Jan/Mar 1953), #12 (Oct/Dec 1953), #14 (Apr/Jun 1954). Above: Indian Chief #16 (Sep/Nov 1954), #21 (Jan/Mar 1956), #22 (Apr/Jun 1956).

"dork" but also the type of guy you wanted beside you in the trenches… and he proved his worth on more than one occasion.

Issue #15 (July/September 1954) introduced White Eagle's backup feature, Red Wing Son of the Chief. Red Wing was the teenage son of the chief of the Navajo. His tribe was Dene (the "people") who were immigrants into the American South West from Northern Canada about the time Columbus was born. Red Wing and his girlfriend White Faun spent their time romping around the desert, getting into mischief, and crossing paths with their enemies, the Zuni, Hopi, and Taos. Since White Eagle occupied more than half the comic the Red Wing stories were shorter and simpler.

Red Wing ran for four years until issue #30 (April/June 1958) when it pulled an Alley Oop and metamorphosed into a different comic strip. "Red Wing and the New Land" started out as a story around the campfire that Old Owl tells to Red Wing about the legend of U-Lan and his tribe of first people as they arrived in North America. The Dene were the last wave of Asians to migrate to North America and when they arrived they found the land already populated. This would lend color to a Navajo oral tradition of the arrival of the first people. Thereafter the stories were about U-Lan who was renamed Red Wing the following issue ("Sign of Courage" #31).

Indian Chief was abruptly canceled after issue #33 (January/March 1959). At its height the comic had a circulation of about half a million. The later issues were becoming more refined in stories and artwork and the introduction of new characters like Young Bow and U-Lan allowed for more variety and creativity. As well Indian Chief was an original character not a licensed one. I asked Paul S. Newman why he thought it was canceled and his response was "I never understood any decision made by the publishers." Perhaps it was declining sales, competition from television (although westerns were very popular at the time), or simply redirecting efforts, but in any case it seems a shame that the title was discontinued just when it was doing so well.

Alberto Giolitti is noted for his artwork in *Turok Son of Stone* but his work on *Indian Chief* is less well-known and not listed in *Overstreet*. Giolitti was a dapper Italian gentleman who drew quickly and admired the style of Chic Young (Blondie). Alberto and his "factory" associates operated out of Italy where the Giolitti family owned a highly successful gelato business. The artwork was delivered regularly from Italy to Western Publishing's offices in New York. In order to dispense with the routine of having each page individually stamped or even delayed by U.S. Customs, he gave the sheets to an Al Italia air hostess he knew who carried them in her bags. The sound of her high heels clicking along the floors of the Western editorial office as she dropped off the artwork became a regular and welcome event.

Other artists contributing to *Indian Chief*, like Jon Small and Rex Maxon, turned out unpretentious drawings, whereas Giolitti's style was refined with strong anatomical representation and excellent combat depictions. His first work appeared in "The Exile" (#2) followed by issues #3, 4 (October/December 1951), 5 (January/March 1952), 7, 9, and 10. "The Sacred Fire" in issue #5 is particularly well done with great combat and battle scenes. Sadly, Alberto Giolitti passed away a few years ago.

From issue #10 on, Rex Maxon became the artist for *Indian Chief* and although his style was simple it was effective because of the quality of the material he had to work with. Good art can save a weak story but good writing can stand on its own… often regardless of the art.

John Buscema's art first appeared in issue #30, when Red Wing transformed itself into U-Lan of the first people, and continued to the end of the series. The final issue, #33, was entirely drawn by him and was the only time he did White Eagle. Like Giolitti, Buscema's work displayed exceptional anatomical representations and action sequences. His prehistoric hunting scenes are compelling and have that "National Geographic look" to them.

Giolitti and Buscema produced the best artwork of the run with issues #5 and 33 respectively providing the prime examples.

Most of the covers were painted by Al Savitt with his brother Sam also doing a few. In the latter part of the series the covers were superbly rendered by the brush of Moe Gollub. The only cover to be signed by the artist was #19 (July/September 1955) by Bill Burnett. The cover to issue #9 shows two braves, who look surprisingly like Turok and Andar, battling a grizzly bear. The pair's first appearance was still two years away.

The cover paintings by Al Savitt and Moe Gollub are adept at capturing movement and action which probably helped them stand out on the newsstands of the 1950s.

Paul S. Newman genuinely enjoyed the research and writing involved in *Indian Chief*, and it shows in the final product. This comic was writer-driven in that he was responsible for the plot, layout, and dialogue. The editors at the time were all educated and very literate with many having come from a pulp background. Newman sees these things as the strength of *Indian Chief*- unlike present day comics which often use a creative team approach with editors who don't always have as strong an educational or literary background.

The stories in *Indian Chief* are pretty good escapist fiction, and I especially like the ones about tribes from my region, the Pacific Northwest, or as British Columbians call it, the south coast. "A Chief is Made" (#8 October/December 1952), "Son of the Chief", "White Eagle and Danger in the North", "White Eagle and Quest of the Chinook Chief", and "White Eagle and the Monster of the Deep" featured such tribes as the Nootka, Kwakiutl, Siwash, Chinook, and Tlingit. The faithful depiction of local scenery and the eminence of the stories bring to mind a past before the white man came to this area.

Dell was good at filling their inside front and back covers with interesting items and *Indian Chief* was no exception. The back covers of issues #3 to 10 (except for issue #8 which for some reason profiles skunks) are reproductions of paintings by the extraordinary Western artist, Frederick [sic] Remington. Others feature Indian lore, famous chiefs, and various tribes. The inside front cover of issue #27 is a striking example, a beautifully drawn full color glossy five panel story on the medicine man.

The Dell pledge first appeared in issue #19 (July/September 1955) as their response to the Comics Code Authority basically stating that their comics are so clean and wholesome that submitting them for approval was unnecessary.

Issues #17-20 used the inside back and back covers for the final two pages of the story. As a kid I liked these Dell issues because not only were you getting some of the panels in glossy full color but also more comics for the dime which meant a better deal. Sadly this format was short-lived.

With a couple of exceptions, Near Mint copies of *Indian Chief* can still be had for under $20, a bargain for 1950s books. Lower grade copies run only a few dollars, about the price of today's comics. They're a good option for anyone looking for a satisfying read at a reasonable price.

Indian Chief is a wonderful portrayal of a way of life which is gone forever, yet as the circle goes around, interest in it is making a come back.

Greg Wasko would like to acknowledge and thank Paul S. Newman for his invaluable assistance during the writing of this article.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Greg's acknowledgment was written before Paul's untimely death, which only increases the strength of the sentiment, for we all owe a huge debt to the King of the Comic Book Writers. Thanks, Paul!

BEST OF THE ATLAS WEST!

BY NICHOLAS CAPUTO

A largely neglected and unfairly maligned genre seems to be the western comic book, even though it has been blessed with some of the most talented and distinctive artists to put pen to paper on the comic book page. While not as imaginative as SF, or as thrilling as superheroes, there is something to this oft-neglected, slightly down the alley genre that attracts me. While I'm not a dyed in the wool aficionado of the western, and it has its inherent limitations and formulas (although that could be said of any genre, including our beloved science fiction and superheroes) there is also a sense of grittiness and romanticism that brings out the best in certain creators, and there were quite a few residing at Atlas Comics in the 1950s and early 1960s which are worthy of note.

Atlas Comics, under the editorial tutelage of Stan Lee in the 1950s, was not very different or more original than its competitors. In fact, publisher Martin Goodman was always insistent on following the latest trends, not inventing new ones (it was not until Lee and co. stumbled into their greatest success by aping DC's superhero formula and turning out something quite different that its competitor that they were considered innovators... Goodman's utmost concern was that it sold). Westerns in movies, novels, radio, and especially in the form of television was a popular attraction and Atlas made sure there were plenty of books on the stands, with titles such as *Wild Western, Apache Kid, Gunsmoke Western* (with the word Gunsmoke in large letters, obviously to cash in on the success of the Gunsmoke series popularized on radio and TV) and one of their earliest and longest running westerns, *Kid Colt, Outlaw*. Atlas' frontier west was overrun with a cadre of rough riders, and they had the talent to bring many of these characters and settings to life.

One of the most prolific and steadiest of artists was Jack Keller, the primary artist on the Kid Colt strip. While his style was quiet and cartoonish, he gave the Kid a normal, everyman look which may have contributed to his appeal. In his blue jeans, red shirt, and buckskin vest, the Kid was the embodiment of the hounded western outlaw who always was searching for peace. Keller, particularly in his early work, brought a fair amount of detail and mood to the Kids tales. He never overwhelmed you with flashiness, but he was a good storyteller. His work in the late 1950s and early 1960s loosened up a great deal, but he was inked by a number of uncredited *(Continued on page 61)*

Continued from page 24

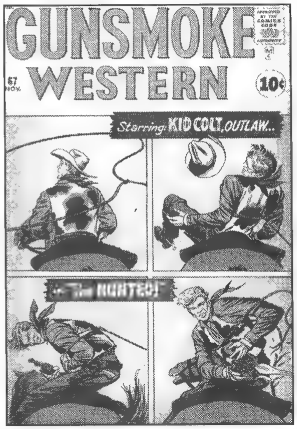
beats or buffaloes the hero into riding the owlhoot trail at his side until the Kid turns the tables. Ultimately, the Two-Gun Kid bests him in a fight, and off he goes to jail, never to return. Continuity was not yet a Marvel staple at this point, so it's hard to say what Lee and Kirby were thinking when they recycled this hardcase.

The final Two-Gun Kid tale in that issue, "Guns Blaze on the Tombstone Trail," ended on a scary note—with the kid lying exhausted and unconscious after surviving an ambush. If you didn't read the text, you'd think he'd been gunned down dead. He might as well have been. Despite Lee's promise of more six-gun action in the next issue, he was never again spotted in the Marvel Universe.

In a funny sort of way, the Marvel Westerns reflected what was selling in other quadrants of the Marvel Universe. By 1960, it was monsters. The first glimmerings of a fantasy streak creeping into Marvel's corral occurred in *Kid Colt, Outlaw*.

It started with *Kid Colt, Outlaw* #93 and "The Ghost of Midnight Mountain." A great spooky Jack Kirby cover promised thrills and chills inside, but alas, it was only Jack Keller and an off-beat yarn about owhoots in sheets who are beaten in the end, not by Kid Colt, but by something strange but never explained on Midnight Mountain. Issue #100 sported another Kirby cover that suggested Kid Colt defying a monster called Warroo, but "When the Witch Doctor Strikes" was another Jack Keller letdown. The same with "The Ghost of Silver City" in #102.

"The Giant Monster of Midnight Valley" in #107 (November 1962) is a different matter. Rambling through Texas, Colt witnesses a crashing spaceship and encounters a giant green alien. For a simple cowpoke, he takes it well. Until a posse shoots him plumb dead in the chest. Ordinarily, this would be the end of the trail for the poor unhung fugitive, but the alien miraculously revives him and takes off in a rescue spaceship. Unimaginative artwork pulls too many punches to bring off this story as it should have been told. Sadly, the Kirby cover outshines the Keller story by a country mile.



***Gunsmoke Western* #67 (Nov 1961) starring Kid Colt in "The Hunted!" by Lee and Keller**

That same month over in *Gunsmoke Western* the Kid battled a fast-draw mechanical man constructed by a bank robber he bested in a gun duel. He was the sorriest robot you ever did see, and for a while there Kid Colt must have had nightmares every time he bedded down on the trail.

By far, the boldest attempt to inject new life into Marvel's Western books occurred in *Rawhide Kid* #22 (June 1961), just a few months after the Two-Gun Kid battled his bison-lizard. "Beware! The Terrible Totem!" found Rawhide face-to-face with a giant living totem pole that haunted a silver mine. From the moody cover to the extra-long 19-page story, it was a classic. And in the end, the Totem was not revealed to be a freak bison in a rubber suit, but rather an unknown denizen of the inner Earth—to which Rawhide finally consigns him.

Other than these experiments, Lee kept to the straight-and- narrow of the Wild West as it was popularly conceived. Until the advent of the new Two-Gun Kid, that is. Picking up the numbering of the old version only a year and a half later, Lee and Kirby once again reteamed with one aim in mind: to superhero-ize the stagnating genre.

When sickly Eastern tenderfoot Matt Hawk steps off the stage at Tombstone, Texas, he immediately tangles with Clem Carter and his town ruffians, who are bedeviling grizzled old ex-gunfighter Ben Dancer. Only the intercession of Clem's step-sister, schoolma'arm Nancy Carter, breaks up the ruckus. Both Nancy and old Ben take a shine to Hawk, who has come to Texas for his health and to open up a law practice. But Dancer shows his respect in a dramatic way: he teaches Matt to become a feared gunhawk, giving him a stallion named Thunder as a graduation present. Donning a black bandanna mask and a brown buckskin version of Kid Colt's white cowhide vest for luck over the old Two-Gun's traditional black garb, Matt becomes the new Two-Gun Kid, taking the name, he says, from a dime-novel hero he had read about back East. (Well, it was good enough for Barry Allen…)

The new Two-Gun's career hits a snag in the second story in *Two-Gun Kid* #60 when Clem Carter is killed and Nancy mistakenly blames him for it. But the feud proves short-lived when in the next issue, Nancy can't bring herself to shotgun the masked lawman. His work done, Ben Dancer hops a stage for retirement back East, never to be seen again. Later, a burly ex-prizefighter named Boom-Boom Brown would be introduced as a sidekick. The only one to operate masked, ironically, the new Two-Gun was the sole member of Marvel's principal Western trio not wanted for a crime he never committed. Kid Colt and Rawhide might have enjoyed less hectic lives if they had only taken a page from Matt Hawk's lawbook.

A year or so later, Stan Lee would reinvent the Two-Gun Kid yet again, only in a modern setting, and call him Daredevil, AKA attorney Matt Murdock. Lee revived the Two-Gun Kid name, I suspect, because Goodman was fond of the title. Two-Gun had, after all, been his first successful Western comics hero. And Goodman had once published a pulp magazine called *Two-Gun Western*.

In one of Kirby's early Matt Hawk adventures, he tangled with a bad guy named Moose Morgan, who bares more than a passing resemblance to a certain bushwhacker with the same handle Kid Colt ran off a few years previous. There may have been more continuity in Stan Lee's Westerns than anyone ever suspected.

The end of the glory days of the Marvel western coincide with the rise and dominance of the Marvel superhero. Kirby gave up *Rawhide Kid* with #32, March 1963 and *Two-Gun Kid* after only three issues a month later. Lee didn't seem to know what to do with these orphaned cowpokes for a while. Beginning the next issue, Dick Ayers, who had drawn the hit Ghost Rider in the 1950s, began what was to become his long Two-Gun Kid run. But Rawhide Kid proved a tougher title to tame.

Jack Davis took over the artwork with #33, producing three of the most unusual-looking Westerns Marvel ever released. Perhaps they were too unusu-

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THE MOST FANTASTIC WESTERN ADVENTURE OF ALL TIME!!
"the GIANT MONSTER of MIDNIGHT VALLEY!"
THE MONSTER IS LIFTING ME INTO THE AIR BY SOME STRANGE POWER!! I'M COMPLETELY HELPLESS!

A closeup of the Marvel fantasy/monster art used on the cover of *Kid Colt Outlaw* #107 (Nov 1962)

al because suddenly Dick Ayers replaced him. (Jack Keller took a crack at Rawhide for one miserable issue best left forgotten.) But Rawhide would never be the same again. Kirby continued executing the covers for a while. Even that effort was short-lived.

It was during the Dick Ayers stints on both titles that Lee attempted to superhero-ize his Western line. It started with the introduction of the first supervillain in Kid Colt. Up until this time, returning villains were almost unheard of. Kid Colt did have a recurring nemesis in a manhunter named Sam Hawk who pursued him through the pages of *Gunsmoke Western* and his own magazine between 1959-61. In *Kid Colt* #111, July, 1963, Lee reintroduced him simply by ordering Jack Keller to redraw Hawk's three prior tales into one 3-part story, for which Stan simply recopied the original dialogue.

Thereafter, Hawk appeared often. (It was Stan's habit to recycle stories that way. He was forever retelling various Kid origins, leaving the artist to find new ways to draw the same scenes while he simply inserted the old balloons and captions. Between 1959-1960 alone, three different artists retold the original Two-Gun Kid's origin to the tune of the same Stan Lee script.)

With issue #110, May 1963, the Kid first tangled with a combination frontier Dr. Doom and Iron Man named Iron Mask. A metal-masked gunfighter in a bulletproof vest, Iron Mask returned in *Kid Colt* #114. It's interesting to note that colorist Stan Goldberg made the same mistake with Iron Mask he had made with the Hulk and Iron Man. He colored him gray. With his second gunfight, he became a steely blue. Iron Mask would return often. By that time, Kid Colt had tangled with a host of weird villains, including the likes of the Scorpion, The Fat Man and his bewitched Boomerang, and Doctor Danger and the Invisible Gunman. In true Kid Colt style, he shot these unorthodox desperadoes just sufficiently to wound, not kill.

In *Kid Colt* #118, the law finally catches up with the outlaw, and he finds himself on a chain gang with three of his old foes, who gleefully pile onto the poor Kid. Later, Iron Mask would weld a bunch of these guys into a frontier Circus of Crime.

Maybe it was because he was already masked, but the Two-Gun Kid didn't see his fair share of supervillains. The Fox showed up in #67. Then came the Purple Phantom. Clearly, this idea came from Dick Ayers, for this no-account was simply a bad-guy version of his old Ghost Rider character. Stan himself must have dipped back into old *Marvel Mystery*s for the villain in #70. Owlhoot Harry Kane gets hold of a magical Indian potion and gains superspeed, on his feet and in a gunfight. Saying his name real fast, he becomes Mr. Hurricane. A year later, the Panther, suspiciously tricked out like the Fantastic Four's Black Panther, (who had yet to be created) springs into Matt Hawk's life.

The Rawhide Kid started battling super-gunfighters beginning in the Jack Kirby days with the Bat. Jack Davis brought in the Raven a few issues later. The Rattler showed up in #37, and would return years later. Then "Red" Raven—shades of the Golden Age flop—swoops down in the next issue. A cross between the original Timely Red Raven and Spider-Man's Vulture, he's a flying desperado togged out in a red-and-purple outfit with working wings. When Rawhide dons himself a similar pair of white wings, they engage in the first recorded aerial gunfight in history. Rawhide battled an escaped gorilla in the next issue, but it seemed like just another dusty street fracas after all that had come before.

Following that, *Rawhide Kid* #40 debuted the first Marvel Western hero crossover, in which the Two-Gun Kid tangled with the Rawhide Kid… and both shot it out with a bad guy duded up as a grizzly bear. Inasmuch as Lee and Ayers were producing both features at that time, this historic first was the logical place to start.

This kicked off the third big Marvel Western trend of the 1960s. Periodically, the Kids would run across one another. Kid Colt showed up in *Rawhide Kid* #50. Rawhide popped up in *Two-Gun Kid* #85. Rawhide teamed up with Kid Colt and Sam Hawk to put Iron Mask away in *Kid Colt, Outlaw* #121. Four issues later, Two-Gun Kid guest-starred in Colt's own book and tried to bring him in—the ingrate. But as Matt Hawk, he offered to defend the Kid on court. That was the least a guest-star could do.

These teamups unfolded in the usual Marvel manner. The two Kids—it didn't matter which—would meet up, get into a misunderstanding, tangle furiously, then team up to best the bad guy of the month. They usually parted as compadres. Invariably, they would ride together again, only to fall out again over something some far-fetched misunderstanding. You would think they'd learn. But they didn't.

Lee managed to keep the inter-Kid continuity pretty straight. Not so Gary Friedrich who wrote "Three Rode Together," *Two-Gun Kid* #89. Apparently, he never read the previous team-ups. When he put the trio together, the Two-Gun Kid acted as if he had never met the others! Talk about Marvel misunderstandings! After that fiasco, the Kids stayed pretty much in their respective corrals.

That was in 1967. The Westerns seemed to be the hot potatoes of the Marvel Universe. The Two-Gun Kid was being written by people ranging from Sol Brodsky to Odgen Whitney, who had assumed art chores at the last ditch. An attempt to revive the old Magazine Enterprises' Ghost Rider at Marvel died after seven issues. The Westerns were definitely in decline.

Kirby never returned to any of them. Neither did Stan Lee, once he shed Kid Colt—the one he clung to longest—in 1965. His brother Larry Lieber took over *Rawhide Kid* with #42 (October 1964), as writer and artist, and went on to a distinguished run that, while it never reached the gunsmoke glory of the Lee-Kirby days, remains memorable to this day.

One of the first things Lieber did was to retell the Kid's origin in issue #45, embellishing it substantially. Lieber revealed that Johnny Bart had been born Johnny Clay, and had two brothers who, like him, survived a wagon-train massacre that claimed their parents. One became a no-account cardsharp, the other a sheriff. Johnny's search for and discovery of his roots gave new life and interest to the mercurial character. Under Lieber, he matured into a thoughtful, introspective loner who may have lost most of his Kirby fire, but gained something far greater—his humanity.

Kid Colt met a different fate. Except for covers, Kirby never once drew him. Jack Keller continued being his sole artist in both *Kid Colt, Outlaw* and *Gunsmoke Western* until the later was canceled in 1963 and just before the former finally bit the dust. Keller's last issue seems to have been #133, but the art is credited not to him, but to "The Whole Bullpen." Looks like he left the series with his final story unfinished and it was team-inked. By that time, Larry Lieber had added him to his scripting chores, after dropping the Two-Gun Kid.

Post-Keller artists included Herb Trimpe and Werner Roth, separately and teamed up, as well as old reliable Dick Ayers. Suspended in 1968, *Kid Colt, Outlaw* was revived a year later for one last new story in #140. (A final Ogden Whitney Two-Gun Kid yarn graced #141.) After using up all leftover inventory, the title shifted over to all-reprint vehicle for vintage Jack Keller tales. The most lackluster of Marvel's cowboys artistically, Kid Colt nevertheless remained the most popular in sales until 1968, when both *Kid Colt, Outlaw* and *Two-Gun Kid* were put out to pasture. Even Jack Kirby in all his bravura gunsmoke glory hadn't been able to pull off that feat of circulation wizardry.

Kid Colt was absorbed into Lieber's *Rawhide Kid* as a backup feature. For a few issues, he and Rawhide made an uneasy team before finally going their separate ways.

Rawhide Kid continued strong right into the Bronze Age (until 1973) before going all-reprint too. This seemed to be the year Marvel finally gave up on their Western heroes.

The next month, Rawhide Kid was briefly revived for a one-shot called *Western Team-Up* in which he hooked up with the Dakota Kid, but both Kids failed to catch on. An earlier attempt to resuscitate the Ghost Rider in 1970's *Western Gunfighters* was such a flop Marvel actually killed off the character, turning his costume over to a replacement spook. Readers didn't seem any more interested in the latest incarnation than the earlier one. An Indian hero, Red Wolf, also failed, on, as did attempts at more "contemporary" Westerns like Jerry Seigel's Gunhawk and a pair of Wild West adventurers calling themselves the Gunhawks, Reno Jones, and Kid Cassidy.

Marvel's only other surviving original series, *Gunhawks*, was canceled the same month as *The Rawhide Kid*, one issue after Kid Cassidy was gunned down. The old gunfighter who started Marvel's earliest cowpokes on the trail, Syd Shores, returned to draw both series. But he was near the end of his trail, too.

One exception was *The Outlaw Kid*. Revived in 1970, he proved such a hit that when the reprints ran out, Dick Ayers began drawing new yarns, formally retiring the masked gunslinger in issue #16 before giving way to a new round of reprints and eventual cancellation.

As time wore on, Marvel settled for recycling old reprints. This led to some confusion, if not chicanery. When they dipped into the original Rawhide Kid inventory, they simply recolored his hair and tried to pass him off as the Kirby version enjoying a domestic respite from the Law. *The Rawhide Kid*'s run finally expired in 1979.

The reprint editors had more trouble making old Clay Harder Two-Gun Kid stories work as Matt Hawk adventures. At first, they clumsily daubed a mask and cowhide vest over the original Kid's black trail duds. Later, they let his outfit be and inserted explanatory blurbs claiming that Matt Hawk rode footloose and fancy-free before settling down to practice law in Tombstone. This patently violates Matt Hawk's fresh-from-Boston origin, but the fable has since been become part of Marvel canon.

In the decades since, it seems as if Marvel's kid cowboys have been revived only to polish them off. Rawhide Kid was sent to Boot Hill in a 1985 miniseries chronicling his last days. The Two-Gun Kid actually encountered the Avengers during one of their time-travel adventures, and briefly sojourned in the 20th century before going home, but that was an anomaly.

So too were the odd new Western tales popping up in various Marvel anthology titles strictly for trademark purposes. New Dick Ayers Ghost Rider stories were slipped into the back pages of reprints of the '70s Ghost Rider's book in the early '90s, but he was branded the Night Rider to avoid confusion with the modern motorcycle avenger. of which they were two.

Recently, Ghost Rider and the others were revived as more "realistic" scruffy frontier types in a *Magnificent Seven*-style mini-series called *Blaze of Glory*. There, Kid Colt, the Two- Gun Kid (both of them since they were now one-and-the same!), Reno Jones, (miraculously brought back from the dead as the new Ghost Rider) Kid Cassidy (gunned down by his old saddle pard, Reno), the Outlaw Kid, and sundry others all meet their Maker at the hands of an old Ghost Rider villain called the Tarantula. (Kid Colt met a particularly ignominious end, being shot in the back by the upstart bounty hunter, Gunhawk, who was then blown away by a shotgun blast.)

But few fans mourned. It was not really them. Not in looks, nor in spirit. Marvel's kid gunfighters belonged to an earlier, more innocent era of an idealized West populated by unrealistically colorful and clean-cut cowboys that can never be recaptured—except by reading old issues of the now-classic trio of *Kid Colt, Outlaw, Two-Gun Kid,* and *Rawhide Kid*....

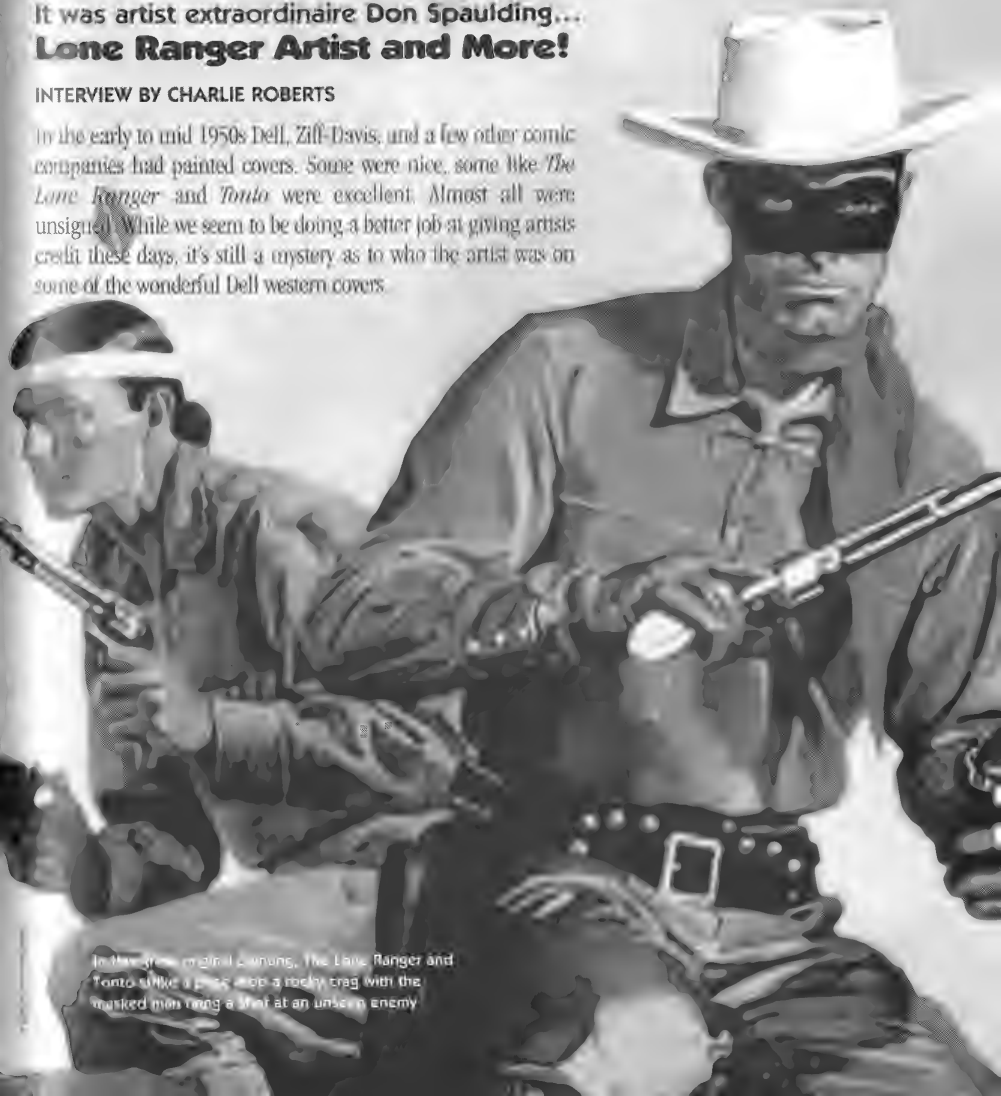
Will Murray is the current writer on the long-running Destroyer paperback adventure series. He started collecting comics during the Christmas vacation, 1961 and remains a huge fan of the combined works of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko.

WHO PAINTED THAT MASKED MAN?

It was artist extraordinaire Don Spaulding... Lone Ranger Artist and More!

INTERVIEW BY CHARLIE ROBERTS

In the early to mid 1950s Dell, Ziff-Davis, and a few other comic companies had painted covers. Some were nice, some like *The Lone Ranger* and *Tonto* were excellent. Almost all were unsigned. While we seem to be doing a better job at giving artists credit these days, it's still a mystery as to who the artist was on some of the wonderful Dell western covers.



In this great original painting, The Lone Ranger and Tonto strike a pose atop a rocky crag with the masked man firing a shot at an unseen enemy

Buck Jones drives the stagecoach with the bad guys in hot pursuit: in Don's original painting of this *Four Color* cover scene

The name Don Spaulding came up a few years ago when some original covers were discovered. Then in November 1997 my boss, Ted Hake, and I were at a western collectibles show looking for items for the auction catalogue. I noticed some nice limited edition western prints for sale, then I saw the signature, Don Spaulding. To my left was standing one of THE great mystery artists of 1950's painted Dell Covers.

It's times like this that become magic memories. Here I am, fortunate enough to be working for Hake's Americana, and I run into Don Spaulding. Ain't life grand?

After talking with Don at the show, by phone, and exchanging letters we met at his house in New York on May 28th, 1998. Don has an amazing collection of authentic western artifacts and his wife Colette runs an antique shop in a nearby village.

Don was working on his latest painting "Old Lovers" and it was quite a pleasure visiting their home. While at his residence, I had a conversation with Don as follows:

CHARLIE ROBERTS: Don, how did you get started drawing and what was your interest in art early on?

DON SPAULDING: First of all, you must understand I grew up in the age of magazines. My Dad was an inveterate reader and he had subscriptions to *The Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, True Magazine*, etc. so magazines came flooding into my home every week and I saw all the great illustrations by Norman Rockwell and many other great illustrators. That is what started my interest in art.

I was born in 1926. From the eighth grade on I had a great interest in drawing. I was born in Brooklyn but lived there only a short time. We then moved to Connecticut until I was about five and then we moved back to New York... living in Jamaica on Long Island. Finally we moved to Hartsdale which was where I spent the most time.

When I got to high school, I took art courses. My high school art teacher really encouraged my interest in art and recommended that I go to the Art Students League. When I graduated from high school (during World War II) I went to the League and took a month of classes with Brackman.

Then I was drafted. I was 18. That was a week before Christmas, 1944 which was during the height of the Battle of the Bulge. I hadn't any work published yet.

Since I was in the Army during the desperate days of the war at the height of the Battle of the Bulge, I expected to be dead within six months. But luckily I took basic training in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina and advance training at Ft. Sill... so by the time I finished advanced training, the war was over.

I was then shipped to Japan for occupation duty for a year. Over there, I was able to use some of my drawing talents. I was made the editor of a unit newspaper and drew a cartoon for it every day... sort of a poor man's Bill Mauldin. Then at the end of 1946 I got out of the Army. In 1947 I went back to the Art Students League and studied there for four years. Just before the fourth year, I had the chance to study with Norman Rockwell.

CHARLIE: How did that come about?

DON: Just pure luck. One day when I walked into school the teacher said "How would you like to go up to Vermont and study with Norman Rockwell?" I nearly fell over. It turned out that Jerry Rockwell (Norman's oldest son) had been studying there for awhile unknown to me. I think Norman wanted some artists from the League to come up and keep his interest up. Jerry was sort of an easy going type and I think Norman felt it would do him good too.

This was in 1950. I always remember because it was the year the Korean War started. You know, when I got out of the Army after World War II, they really pressured everybody to join the reserves. Of course that was very tempting because I was a Sergeant at the time and they tell you all you have to do is train a couple of weeks over the summer and you retain all of your pay as a Sergeant. But I hated the Army so I was determined not to be connected to it in any way. It's a lucky thing I felt that way because if I had, I would have been back in Korea in 1950. Not only might I been killed, but I would have missed out on the opportunity to study with Rockwell.

Anyway... Rockwell invited five of us from the school. I got the number of one of the guys that was going up, Bob Hogue.

le lived in New Rochelle and I called him and asked if he wanted to ride up with me. As it turned out, I was the only one of the four who had a car which I had just gotten. My folks bought it for me, it was a 1939 Ford. He and I drove to Vermont ogether and then Don Winslow and Hal Stevenson arrived. Will McBride was already there. The other man was Jim Gaboda from the League. We pulled up and were told we were going to ive in the schoolhouse. The schoolhouse was in sight of ockwell's house.

CHARLIE: How much did Rockwell's training cost?

DON: The entire thing was all gratis... which was typical of the type of person Rockwell was. We had a place to live, but we provided our own food. We were originally supposed to be there for the summer but as it turned out, I stayed for five months (into the fall) because I felt it was a wonderful opportunity. The League was very flexible so I wasn't penalized because I didn't go back in September.

There were no set activities but Rockwell gave us assignments to do. One was to do this prize-fight scene. There was an old Palooka laying on a training table having just been beaten up in the ring and this sleazy-looking trainer sitting on the table trying to decide whether he was worth patching up or not... and a young fighter going out the door into the blaze of light. In other words, there was contrast between the two—one guy just starting, the other at the end of his career.

The Lone Ranger wrestles an armed opponent in an exciting Spaulding original painting

Norman arranged for the four of us to go down to North Adams, Massachusetts, where they had a training facility and we were allowed to go in the training rooms and so forth and sketch. Later, Rockwell had models pose for us at the schoolhouse. That was one assignment, but we did landscapes too. He also had other illustrators come and talk to us.

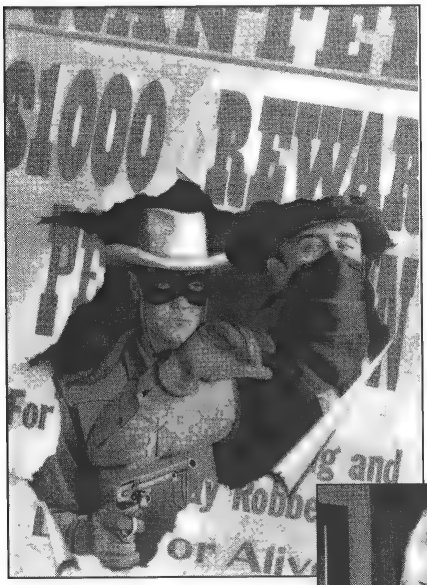
CHARLIE: Did he ever say "One of you guys want to do some of this background or anything?"

DON: Don Winslow did... it turned out that he stayed there for years and worked as Rockwell's apprentice in many ways... doing backgrounds and so forth. I would go for visits and stay with Don in the schoolhouse, so I stayed in touch with Rockwell that way. One time Rockwell invited me to stay in his guest cottage. It was his first house and where his first studio burned down. I later bought a place of my own in South Dorset, Vermont where I used to go for six months of the year and paint... and so again, I was down to Rockwell's a lot.

A grimly-determined Lone Ranger attempts a take-down in a nicely-realized Don Spaulding painting

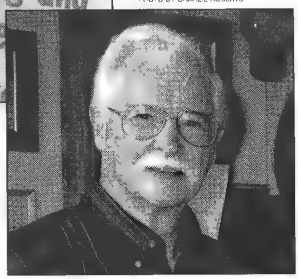
CHARLIE: Did you use photography in your stuff?

DON: For years and years Rockwell worked from the model. He never used photographs until the late '30s. In those days, there were people whose profession was artists' models. There were all these wonderful character types that were available to sit for hours and hours.



The Lone Ranger captures a crook in this incredible original art "tear through" painted cover image

PHOTO BY CHARLIE ROBERTS



Don Spaulding in his studio June 1998

Rockwell used them so much in his work.

After years of doing that, you know what you're doing whether it be photographs or anything else. Rockwell's work did change through the years as a result of photography though. If you compare his work in the '20s to his work in the '50s, there are big differences.

CHARLIE: Was this because photography was being used more in magazines?

DON: Sure. If you look at the old illustrations in magazines in the '20s and '30s, they got away with things you could never get away with today. This made-up look to the figures, etc. People want realism. A lot of people like this photographic look.

CHARLIE: How did your five months with Rockwell come to an end?

DON: I felt I should get back to school and my folks felt I should come home. There was also the feeling that I was imposing on Rockwell because I was living rent free and so forth, so I thought I should go home and get some more of the League under my belt. It was time to make samples and go out and look for work.

Also just about that time illustration was in a state of flux. All the art directors were looking for innovative techniques and of course not too long after that Rockwell himself was dropped by the *Post* so he was searching for work. He took assignments from *Look Magazine*, ads, and so forth.

The heyday was over for the traditional illustrator. I had a rough time and that's why I started working for the comic books.

CHARLIE: Okay, so you came home and went around with samples in the city?

DON: Yeah, I went around to pocketbook (paperback) houses and magazines and so forth. They all smiled, said nice things, and I never heard from them again. But then I took my samples to Dell Publishing.

CHARLIE: What kind of samples?

DON: They were general illustration samples... mostly adventure type stuff. The art director I saw there was Ed Marine. He was art director for the comic books. He liked my work and took a chance on me. That was probably a year or so after art school.

CHARLIE: Had you had anything published by then at all?

DON: Not much of anything. I sold a small drawing to *American Legion Magazine*... little stuff like that. Dell was my first big client.

CHARLIE: Had you read comics at all?

DON: I was never a big comic book fan. I was aware of them, and of course the comics of those days were mostly the DC type, like *Superman* and so forth... I was never big into the superhero thing. I did enjoy doing Buck Jones because he was a big hero of mine.

CHARLIE: So you went to Western Publishing and they gave you an assignment...

DON: Yes... I think the first was a cover of a cowboy standing in a stream (why he's standing in a stream I don't know) but he's standing in the stream and there was supposed to be a Yaqui Indian sneaking up behind him.

They liked it and they gave me a Lone Ranger to do. That was the one where he was swinging on a rope kicking the outlaw in the face.

CHARLIE: What was the pay rate back then?

DON: My recollection is that it was like... $85... it went up through the years.

CHARLIE: How long did you do these until you finally saw one on the newsstand.

DON: Well, I usually saw the proofs quickly. By the time I went in with the next assignment Ed Marine usually had a proof of it, and later he would also hand me a completed comic book. I didn't have to buy them.

CHARLIE: So it would usually be a few months until it was actually printed?

DON: No, very quickly.

CHARLIE: You must have been proud of your work being published on the cover of something.

DON: Well, my folks were, especially my Dad. He would save all the covers but I was never real-

ly proud of the comic books because I felt it wasn't the height of illustration. But it was a good experience for me. Among comedians they say before you make it big you have play the mountains because it gives you a place to be lousy. Well, comic books gave you a place to be lousy. I had experience doing commercial work and working with art directors and it was great.

CHARLIE: Would you have preferred to sign the art?

DON: They didn't want us to sign the art. Some people got away with it but I don't know how. There was a prohibition against signing the art.

CHARLIE: Did that bother you?

DON: No, not really. There were a few I would have liked to have signed, and of course I regret it now because nobody knows I did the covers.

CHARLIE: I think you said your cover count was something like 60 Lone Rangers, 15 Buck Jones, 18 Tontos, and maybe more?

DON: Yeah, and then I did a few others like *Tarzan*. Then I went on to do other illustration and Ed Marine called me a couple of times years later to come back in and do others which I did in gouache. The early ones I did all in oil. I think the last one I did was some science fiction thing, where these giant trees (with claws on their branches) destroying a city... and there were wrecked cars laying around and so forth. Some superhero character muscular type was chopping at the tree with a hatchet. I don't recall the title of that one.

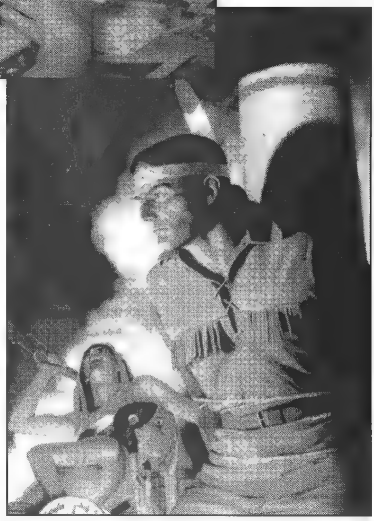
CHARLIE: Were you friends with any of the other artists that worked at Dell?

DON: No, I wasn't friends with them but I met some of them. For instance, Sam Savitt... he was mainly the horse artist... and still is! I know he did some of the *Lone Ranger* covers where a horse was featured. I remember one where the Lone Ranger is on horseback and there was a train... and cattle running across in front of the train. He did others where the Lone Ranger was on running horses... stuff like that.

Don holds Tonto art and the final published comic

PHOTO BY CHARLIE ROBERTS

Tonto is tied up and in trouble on this intense painting as his captors dance themselves into a frenzy



CHARLIE: On most of the Tonto covers it looks like you used the same model.

DON: I used myself, mostly. I couldn't find anyone who looked like an Indian and Tonto was such a phony-looking Indian anyway.

CHARLIE: Now wait, you've already disparaged the Lone Ranger and now poor Tonto? (*Laughter*)

DON: I can't help it. What kind of an Indian wears a feather straight up on the back of his head and a headband? Indians didn't wear headbands first of all. That was something the movies came up with so their wigs would stay on when they were riding horseback. Tonto's a phony Indian. I had this buckskin shirt I bought almost exactly like Tonto's and I would just pose for the figure myself and change the head, etc.

CHARLIE: Did you take photos or pose in a mirror?

DON: I took photographs, and then made a lot of changes. That's the thing about working with photographs, it's fine as long as you are able to make changes.

CHARLIE: Did you model for any other covers?

DON: I can't remember, I might have posed myself for the figure of the Lone Ranger when I didn't have exactly what I wanted when the other people posed. Tonto was really the only one.

CHARLIE: Did you put any less effort into your work because you didn't like the characters?

DON: No, no. That is one thing we learned at Rockwell's. You give it your best shot. Not giving it your best shot is completely alien to the Rockwell way of thinking. Even a low paying job.

Rockwell gave his total effort to everything he did and that's what I have tried to do. I have heard other artists say "hell, this isn't the Sistine Chapel"

Don Spaulding Covers (Dell)

Buck Jones (6 covers)	Tonto (18 covers)	Lone Ranger (16 covers)
Four Color #500	#13, 14, 15,	#62, 63, 64,
Four Color #546	16, 17, 18,	71, 74, 76,
Four Color #589	19, 20, 21,	79, 83, 86,
Four Color #652	22, 23, 24,	88, 89, 91,
Four Color #733	25, 26, 27,	97, 98, 110,
Four Color #850	29, 30, 31	111

but that's a deadly way of thinking. I have always tried to do my best in all I do. I guess the fact that people are still interested in the covers after 50 years is a sign that I did a pretty good job.

CHARLIE: You mentioned Don Winslow staying at Rockwell's over the years. He was used on covers as well then?

DON: Yes. I used him on covers. He would get angry because I always made him the villain and he was getting an inferiority complex about it. (*Laughter*) But he was great at helping me out.

CHARLIE: Did he ever do any of the covers?

DON: No, he never did any comic book covers at all. As a matter of fact he was very successful the entire time he was up there. He did covers for *American Weekly*, *Cosmet* and other big clients. He had done an advertising campaign. I forget the product but the character's name was "Charlie O..." It was a series of charming drawings of this guy in various situations.

CHARLIE: Did you ever get feedback from any readers at all, say kids buying the comics?

DON: Well, yeah. I think I still have a couple of fan letters in my file. I don't even know how I got them. They must have just sent the letter to Western Publishing and they got it back to me. But there wasn't a lot of it.

CHARLIE: When you painted, would you just start with a pencil sketch and then put the brush work over it?

DON: Yes, most of the time. You see, the pay was so low you couldn't spend a lot of time doing things like preliminaries. Probably I should have though. Once in a while I would get into trouble with the finish because I hadn't thought it through, which, of course is the whole purpose of doing preliminaries.

Preliminaries were basic to Rockwell's way of working. He always tried to solve each problem in one step. By the time he started the finished painting he had all the drawing problems solved, the color problems solved by doing a color sketch and he had done a charcoal preliminary. This was the old way illustrators worked.

I just saw the Leyendecker Show at the Rockwell museum and saw the work he did before he started a painting. It was incredible. He would do studies of different parts such as the head, position of the hands, parts of the drapery. It was amazing. So by the time he got to the finished product he was able to do a fantastic job because all of the design was worked out and he could do it in the wonderful technique he used that looked so fresh.

CHARLIE: How much time would it take you to do an average cover?

DON: Probably three weeks or so. Some went faster than others... depending on the subject matter. Some were quite complicated like Buck Jones and the stagecoach. I enjoyed doing the most realistic ones. I was a great fan of the old west and a student of the old west. Really, that's why I continued doing comic books covers because they were westerns and I enjoyed westerns.

I did one Buck Jones where you see a pair of boots and chaps coming down the stairs. I was able to use a real old pair of shotgun chaps on the model... and boots and so forth... they were the real thing that cowboys used. You couldn't do this with the Lone Ranger and Tonto because of their phony costumes.

CHARLIE: You said you got incidental works doing color guides for *Beetle Bailey* and various other Dell Comics?

DON: Yes, for a short period I worked in the art department at Western Printing in Manhattan. I think someone took a sabbatical and I filled in while they were away.

I hated doing the color guides. It was a workhorse job and Al Martino was a very demanding art director. Ed was the art director for comic books which most people would find a bit disparaging to... but he did his very best and demanded that every comic be the best it could be. If it wasn't to his expectations, you went back and worked on it until it was.

CHARLIE: It must have been hard to go from painting covers at home to having to go into the office.

DON: Yes, but, you know, being an artist is a very lonely profession. I don't know if most people realize it, but you sit alone in a studio day after day and so going in to the office was a delightful change. You get to banter with other people. I enjoyed it.

CHARLIE: Who do you feel were your major influences?

DON: My heroes have always been the great illustrators. Norman Rockwell, Dean Cornwell, Howard Pyle. I tried my whole life to emulate them.

CHARLIE: How did you get into western art world?

DON: Well, in the late '70s I had heard of this western art market but didn't know much about it. Then we took a trip out west and I saw some samples of it in galleries as we traveled.

CHARLIE: Did you know any of the artists?

DON: No, not at that time. I had this friend who said, "You're as good as these guys who don't you do some western paintings?" He kept at me and said he would buy them so I did a few and he did buy the first couple and then I did some more.

I always go to this major art show once a year, the Prix de West show in Oklahoma City at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. The top western artists in the country are there. I met the great Tom Lovell there the year before he died. I sat and chatted with him on a short bus trip... it was one of the happiest 25 minutes of my life!

I've met just about all of the major western artists. Even Harold Von Schmidt, the greatest western illustrator... he was my god! It sounds crazy but when I was asked if I wanted to go on this thing with Rockwell for the summer my first fleeting thought was "Oh my God, why couldn't it have been Harold Von Schmidt?" I met him briefly once at a horse show in fact... his son Pete used to pose for me. Harold Von Schmidt never worked with photographs... he always had models pose for him and his sons did a lot of the modeling. Pete was a perfect model.

CHARLIE: What are you most proud of?

DON: My western paintings. I come up with my own ideas instead of from an art director. I really approach them like they were illustrations and that is interesting stories to tell. Because I'm doing them for myself. I don't have to make compromises in order to satisfy a client and I don't paint with the idea that I'll paint this because it will sell. I just try to paint a great painting. I figure if I like it, at least one person will feel the same way.

CHARLIE: Well, so far I think you've been proven right.... You've sold 98% of your paintings and become a nationally known artist!

DON: I've been very lucky.

BEST OF THE ATLAS WEST!

(Continued from page 51)

inkers at times, including Dick Ayers, Chris Rule, and perhaps even Doug Wildey (does anyone else see his inking presence?). Keller later went on to work at Charlton Comics on their Race Car titles, but to the western fan he will always be synonymous with Kid Colt, Outlaw.

One of Atlas's greatest cover artists in the 1950s was Joe Maneely (who certainly deserves an article of his own). In those pre-Kirby days, he was editor Stan Lee's godsend: he could illustrate any genre and make it look good. His intricate fine line and cinematic eye made for some truly beautiful work. His western covers and stories were filled with detailed backgrounds and clothing and his work stood out. He was particularly good on the black-garbed Ringo Kid, a western hero that was thin and menacing, and when Marvel reprinted the title in the 1970s, they used a number of Maneely's covers, which still looked fantastic. Maneely died in an accident at a young age: if he had survived he would almost certainly have continued to be a major asset to the company.

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Russ Heath is another artist whose sensational art invigorated the genre. His gritty style, facial expressions and scenery made you feel the dust and dirt and he brought many a cover to life. Heath was another Atlas perennial who is well-known as one of their top-flight horror artists. His realistic flair served him well on the prairie lands, and his depiction of cowboys, horses and outlaws are as good as they'll get. Heath, still do inspired work in the present, is one of the greatest and most underrated talents in the business. He continues to impress and is a true original.

John Severin's work brought the feel of the west alive, and while he can use caricature to great effect, he is also one of the most detailed and authentic artists in the business. His work at EC comics on their war and historical lines is admired by many, but his covers for Atlas books are also outstanding. He spent some time drawing the first incarnation of the Two-Gun Kid (Lee and Kirby revamped both the Two-Gun Kid and the Rawhide Kid in the early 1960s... as well as Kid Colt, a precursor to their superhero beginnings (as you'll no doubt read elsewhere in this issue of *CBM*). John Severin is an impressive artist who brings his own sensibilities and expertise to everything he does.

There are many others who have proven to be above average in the western field at Atlas: Dick Ayers, who brought the Ghost Rider to life at Magazine Enterprises (ME) a few years earlier, and whose characters and settings always had a solid look at them. He went on to become one of the premiere and longest-lasting western artists at Atlas/Marvel into the 1970s. He did particularly good work on the Wyatt Earp and the revamped Two-Gun Kid strips. Don Heck had a loose, breezy line that lent itself to the genre. His sense of design, backgrounds, and use of blacks were impressive and while he was not associated with any one character, his many short stories stand out as being some of the very best. Angelo Torres, who is better known as one of *MAD*'s most popular artists, was also a favorite of the western shorts. He brought a rough, gritty feel to his westerns. Doug Wildey, the creator of Johnny Quest and more recently Rio (some of his finest western achievements) toiled away on the Outlaw Kid, an ordinary hero that was imbued with the photo-realism and lush blacks.

And then there's Jack Kirby. Kirby returned to Atlas for a short time in 1956, working on a few western tales, notably the Black Rider. Upon his return to the company full time he began contributing to all the company's titles, westerns included. He drew many covers for *Gunsmoke Western*, *Kid Colt* and *Wyatt Earp* as well as producing short back-up tales. He soon teamed up with Stan Lee to reinvigorate the Rawhide Kid, turning the character from a typical western hero into a short, red-headed, ornery anti-hero who would get into freewheeling brawls and take on impossible odds, a precursor to the superheroes to come. Even his costume, replete with blue buttons, echoed Kirby's design for Thor a short time later. Kirby, with his action-packed scenes and sense of dynamism, certainly had a great amount of fun on the Rawhide Kid. Based on his and Lee's revamp, it was a feature that was to last for many years.

I hope this brief essay has given the uninitiated a sense of what the Atlas westerns were like at their best. While they followed a certain formula, there was also a sense of realism because of the great ability of the artists to draw "realistically." Horses, people, clothes, guns, buildings, stagecoaches etc., had to be given a sense of reality that was not always called for in the SF, monster, and superhero stories. This, coupled with the enthusiasm by many of the artists for the genre, usually brought out the best in them.

For the time being, the western comic... including the great Atlas westerns... has faded into the distant past, its hoofbeats echoing in the desert winds. Over the years, other genres have taken its place in the four-color world... more colorful, more fantastic, more unbelievable. But perhaps in the future... as collectors become more sophisticated and open minded about the more obscure collecting genres... the Atlas western titles will beckon to readers, hobbyists, and historians once more.

THE MICHAEL NAIMAN REPORT

Spawn #1 for $150?

Is it just me... or does it appear that some misguided and uninformed folk in the comic collecting world have jumped into the shallow end of the Darwinian gene pool? Now, I'm not blaming CGC for this one (this time!) but, the last time I checked, there must be, oh, 10,000 copies of Spawn #1 in MT condition. Why are people paying over $130-$150 for a CGC graded 9.9 when you could have purchased a MT copy in San Diego this year for $3-5? Does anyone remember the Death of Superman, X-Men A-E, or Gold Foil Turoks? Will wonders never cease?!

Item - Kudos to Jon McClure and his unceasing detective work in the Variant World. Winner of one of last year's prestigious *CBM* awards for Outstanding Research, I applaud Jon for his continuing diligent efforts to discover the rare and unusual.

Just the other day I thought that I was following in Jon's footsteps when I found what I thought to be a "variant." While examining the page quality in a run of *Strange Tales*, I got to issue #113 and I thought... "Eureka! I've found something very strange indeed." Grabbing the *Price Guide*, I looked to see if there was a mention of my discovery... nothing! An examination of the indicia showed "Vol. 1 No. 112 September 1963" yet the cover clearly shows #113 and there is a corresponding Plantman story on the inside. However, a quick call to a couple other collectors confirms that there must have been a printer's error in this case and all of the issues probably have "112" in the indicia instead of "113". So much for variant-fame, early retirement, and newly attained wealth!

Item - I have noticed that some sellers on the Internet are promoting Whitman copies of *Uncle Scrooge* #180-209 as "Scarce, Rare and Hard to find!" Oh, So? Not So! These copies are not that tough-to-find in high grade. Reprints all, I believe that someone is trying to bandwagon the *Uncle Scrooge* #179 craze. Some recent sales of truly tough-to-find Whitmans: *Donald Duck* #222 VG/FN $202.50 (9X Guide) and Uncle Scrooge #179 FN $600 (17.6X Guide); The rare *Carl Barks Library* Vol. V (Uncle Scrooge) for $330 and $350 (roughly 3X more than what you can find the other volumes for in the marketplace). While the 3rd Edition of the *Hakes Guide* is a spectacular piece of reference, they did miss out on the five most rare Scrooge items. Now, I have come to find that even I (Heaven Forbid!) overlooked another example of Scrooglana to add to the next *Hakes* edition. A recent sale on eBay of a pre-1965 Mexican produced Cookie jar went for $1,065! Thank goodness it ended up in the home of a True Believer!

Item - What I cannot believe is the extremely slow market in anything to do with underwater escapades by just about any superhero type. There cannot be any slower sellers than *Sea Devils* (*Showcase* run included), *Sub-Mariner* (Silver Age), and *Aquaman*. Is it the lack of overt superpowers or might it be the leap in faith that the reader must use to fantasize about a completely new and unusual setting. Could it be that when we were originally reading these books (if at all) we might have been more interested in the testosterone charged biff-boom-pow of heroes that lived in cities and towns we could more readily identify with? They had "problems" we could relate to. When was the last time you were worrying about being in or out of the water?

Item - Gazing at this month's *CBM*, you'll find it devoted mostly to the Marvel Westerns. When I called up a hard-core collector buddy to ask him about "key issues" I might discuss, I was met with a sigh of resignation. "Great" he bemoaned, "now everyone will want these and I'll never complete my runs!" I think we've all been *(Continued on pg 66)*

MARKET REPORTS

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The market's as strong as it's ever been, especially for high quality and scarce material. The shows have been hoppin'! San Diego and Chicago were both blockbusters this year. San Diego has grown into a pop culture show, with comics as one part, but also with toys, games, publishers, artists, panels, screenings, symposiums, hot dogs, hamburgers, Crosby-Stills-Nash, and other stuff! The Convention Center is really nice (& will be even better if they ever finish building it) and the weather and scenery in SD can't be beat.

ECs have been steady sellers, which is nice to see, since they're great books. In higher grades they sell quickly... and in lesser grades, they're steady. War comics are also steady, with the "BIG 5" DC War titles leading the way. Atlas war titles from the '50s are very cool, and a bargain also. Westerns dribble and drabble out. They have a following, but it's much smaller than the superheroes and such.

Dells, Gold Keys, Charlton, Archie, Harvey, Tower sell OK, but not nearly as well as they ought to. There's a lot of great stuff that's overlooked in these groups. The most egregious slight concerns the funny stuff, which I hardly sells at all, except at deep discounts. There's a lot of high quality material and great reading in this category, not to mention fond memories. It seems that most comic fans bond much more intensely with their adolescent reading material than with their pre-adolescent reading. Oh, well, c'est la guerre!

In the Silver Age, anything high grade is fair game. Keys fly out so fast, I get paper cuts. The

◆◆ CBM MarketWatch ◆◆

A report of market indicator sales (including % of Guide) by Michael Naiman

All Star Western
#10 VF ... $81 ... 69%
#10 VG ... $91.50 ... 52%
#11 VG ... $8 ... 40%
#119 VG ... $93.50 ... 1.40x
#119 FN ... $77.50 ... 1.15x

Annie Oakley
FC #575 FN ... $7 ... 6.58%

Bat Masterson
#2 VF- ... $92.50 ... 60%
#3 VF ... $16 VG ... 43%
FC #1013 ... $15 ... 1.43%

Billy the Kid (Toby)
#1 VG ... $38.5 ... 38%

Black Diamond Western
#15 VG ... $5.75 ... 39%
#38 GD+ ... $4 ... 40%

Blazing West
#16 FN ... $5.50 ... 24%

Bob Steele
#1 FN ... $6 ... 36%
#1 GD+ ... $15.50 ... 82%

Bobby Benson's B-Bar-B
#4 GD+ ... $10 ... 71%
#13 VF ... $17 ... 43%

Buck Jones
FC #652 FN ... $10.50 ... 1.31X

Cisco Kid
#2 VF ... $42 ... 71%
#9 GD+ ... $4.25 ... 50%
#23 VF ... $7 ... 21%

Cowboy Western
#66 VG ... $7 ... 50%

Cowgirl Romances
#12 VF ... $45 ... 90%

Dale Evans (DC)
#6 VG ... $25.50 ... 43%

Durango Kid
#28 FN ... $14.50 ... 48%

Gabby Hayes
#40 VG+ ... $13 ... 54%
#46 VG+ ... $6.50 ... 36%

Gene Autry (Fawcett)
#1 VF ... $1,000 ... 4.3%

Gene Autry's Champion
#13 VG ... $42 ... 1.40x

Ghost Rider (A-1)
#1 ... $70 ... 80%
#6 ... $44 ... 1.83x
#9 ... $107.50 ... 4.48X%
#10 ... $107.50 ... 4.48X
#10? ... $17.50 ... 3.5X
#110 NM- ... $127.50 ... 4.55X

Gunsmoke Western
#56 ... $3 ... 7%
#62 ... $44 ... 1.05x

Have Gun Will Travel
#4 FN ... $2 ... 20%
#8 GD+ ... $13 ... 13%
#15 VF ... $6 ... 56%

Hawk
#1 ... $185 ... 31%

Hopalong Cassidy
#12 ... $20 ... 20%
#20 FN ... $35 ... 20%
#30 VG ... $24 ... 70%
#83 FN ... $77.5 ... 1.44x

Indian Chief
#7 VG ... $2.5 ... 1.92x
#18 VG ... $7 ... 82%

Indian Fighter
FC #696 ... $6 ... 46%

Jace Pearson of the Texas Rangers
#4 GD+ ... $7 ... 58%
#5 FN ... $6 ... 46%
#14 FN ... $18.5 ... 70%

Jesse James
#5 VG ... $15 ... 63%
#5 FN ... $24 ... 77%
#5? GD+ ... $15 ... 1.92x

Jimmy Wakely
#9 VG+ ... $19 ... 70%

John Wayne Adventure (Toby)
#2 ... $35 ... 58%

Johnny Mack Brown
FC #618 FN. ... ...$22 ... 88%

Kid Colt Outlaw
#11 FN ... $42 ... 37%
#100 ... .$107.50 .4.48X%
#100 ... $107.50 ....4.48X
#100 ... $17.50. .....3.5X
#110 NM- ...$127.50.....4.55X

Kid Montana
#50 VF- .. $9 ... 18%

Laramie
FC #1284 VF ... $25 ... 44%

Lash Larue
#11 FN ... $20 ... 47%
#17 FN ... $20 ... 47%

Lone Ranger
#117 VG+ ... $11.50 ... 11%
#117 VG. ... $16 ... 1.00X
#136 FN ... $10 ... 20%
#1 GD+ .. $11 ... 9.17%

Lone Rider
#8 VG ... $10 ... 63%

Maverick
#11 VF ... $4 ... 7.4%
#13 VF ... $7 ... 47%
#15 VG ... $10.50 ... 1.40x
FC #892 (#1) VF- ... $4 ... 47%

Pioneer West Romances
#5 VF ... $11.5 ... 44%

Prize Comics Western
#19 VG+ ... $11 ... 37%

Rangers
#1 GD+ ... $11 ... 37%
#35 GD+ ... $14.50 ... 48%
#62 FN ... $14.5 ... 48%

Rawhide (TV)
FC #1307 VG- ... $3.50 ... 80%
FC #1323 ... $10.50 ... 1.40X
FC #1326 ... $19.50 ... 2.57%
FC #1361 ... $38.5 ... 2.71%

Rawhide Kid
#17 ... $20 ... 1.90X
#53 VG+ ... $45 ... 1.93x
#56 VG ... $21 ... 1.63x
#59 FN ... $35 ... 1.75X
#71 NM- ... $17.50 ... 39%

Red Ryder
#41 VG+ ... $40 ... 44%
#43 VG ... $6 ... 11%
#44 FN ... $40 ... 1.33x
#46 VG+ ... $41 ... 1.37x
#70 FN ... $21 ... 1.05x
#143 VG ... $20 ... 71%

Restless Gun
FC #1186 VF ... $7 ... 70%
FC #1196 VF ... $10 ... 43%
FC #1334 ... $10 ... 43%
FC #1346 ... $20 ... 87%

Rex Allen
#14 VF ... $6 ... 75%
#15 VF ... $12 ... 40%
#23 NM ... $14 ... 1.17%

Rex Hart
#1 FN ... $4 ... 1.33%

Rifleman
#16 FN ... $11.25 ... 75%
#17 VF ... $12 ... 1.60x

Romance Trail
#6 VG ... $14 ... 1.27x

Roy Rogers
#88 VG+ ... $20 ... 74%
#89 VG ... $10 ... 34%
#90 VG+ ... $15 ... 1.50x
#92 NM ... $10.50 ... 58%
FC #1166 FN ... $12.5 ... 1.25x

Smiley Burnette
#1 VF ... $41 ... 1.17%

Sugarfoot (TV)
FC #907 (#1) VG-$10 ..... 40%

Texas Rangers in Action
#58 VG ... $10 ... 1.25x
#71 VG ... $10 ... 71%

Tom Mix
#1 VF ... $10 ... 28%
#5 FN ... $40 ... 71%
#6 VG+ ... $10.50 ... 30%
#9 VG ... $30 ... 43%
#26 VF ... $30 ... 43%
#27 FN ... $21 ... 70%

Two Gun Kid
#63 VG+ ... $17.50 ... 1.17x
#70 VG+ ... $11.50 ... 2.30x
#71 VG+ ... $61 ... 11.09X
#73 FN ... $48 ... 48
#80 FN ... $84 ... 84
#1 (Timely) FN ... $250 ... 50%

Weird Western Tales
#12 VG ... $5 ... 42%
#13 VF ... $16 ... 64%
#28 NM ... $4.25 ... 43%

Western Gunfighters
#21 GD+ ... $11 ... 73%
#22 VG ... $7.50 ... 75%
#27 GD+ ... $5 ... 50%

Western Kid
#6 VF ... $10 ... 50%

Westerner
#24 VG $10 50%

Wild Bill Elliott
#1 FN ... $5 43%
#10 FN ... $10.50 ... 47%
#13 GD+ ... $10.50 ... 1.40x

Wild Western
#13 VG+ ... $13 ... 87%

Wyatt Earp
#6 FN ... $12 ... 43%
#7 FN ... $15 ... 50%
#23 VG+ ... $14.5 ... 1.93x

lesser grades move along at a steady pace, and I try to price them reasonably in order to cater to true blue collectors. The pricing on the near-minty stuff is tricky, since the marketplace is so volatile right now. We price it anywhere from 1.1 x Guide to 2.5 x Guide… depending.

Some Sales: Avengers #2 VF+ $485, #3 VF+ $325 Fantastic Four #49 NM $375, Annual 1 VF+ $575, House of Mystery #144 NM $135, Lois Lane #50 NM $65,# 56 NM $55. Many Supermans between #180 and 220 in NM and NM+ for 1.3x Guide each.

1970's books are following the Silver lead, with the same kind of pattern. Buyers tend to be a little more finicky with these since more of them are still available in high grade. The 15 and 20 centers are getting to be in short supply in NM.

Some Sales: House of Mystery #174 VF $49, Hulk #122 NM $48, Iron Fist #15 NM $42, Spidey #122 NM+ $185, 129 NM/M $325.

Golden Age remains strong, with Timelys, well known DC's, and cool cover and artist books from various companies leading the way. Timelys are tough to find in any volume and tend to fly out when we have them. DC's, especially if they're nice looking, have wings too. There's been a surge in interest in Quality titles, which is long overdue, since they did a lot of great stuff.

Some Sales: All-American #17 FN+ $4,900; Catman #28 GD/VG $125; Marvel Mystery #48 VG $1,200; Mystic #1 FN-, USA #5 GD+; Wonderworld #7 VG+ $1,100.

Pre-Code Crime, Horror & Mystery are steady. The frenzy of a couple years ago has died down, but there are still a number of books that sell right away if we can find 'em. Pricing this category is very difficult, because I feel the Price Guide is in dreamland on a lot of these books (and so do many others in the marketplace). We price based on demand and what the market will bear. For example, we sold a Weird Mysteries #2 for $275. Guide in that grade is $185!

Some Sales: Amazing Adventures (Z-D) #3 FN+ CT $125; Eerie #7 FN+ $185, Weird Thrillers #1 VG+ $175.

'Til next time, may the Many Moons of Moonipur shine down upon your collection.

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ComicLink.Com's sales of vintage, investment-quality material continue to be robust. The comic market is on a convincing up-trend and both CGC and non-CGC books are selling well. Many of our newly listed higher-priced comics do tend to be CGC-graded although I do verify grading for all non-CGC graded books selling through ComicLink.Com before they are shipped out to buyers.

The original comic art market also continues to be extremely active. Early Silver Age art continues to be sought-after with Spidey Ditko and early X Men art leading the way.

This is an exciting time for the vintage comic book genre and I am enthused to be a part of it. There appears to be no evidence of the up-trend slowing any time soon. On scarce and high-grade material, investors are seeing month to month price increases, rather than the gradual year-to-year rise that is reported by the annual Overstreet Price Guide. As this is happening, long-time high-grade collectors are seeing their investments pay off in a big way. The market has not neglected new investors either. While the stock market may be slowing down, in my opinion it appears the Comic Book Bull Market has just begun!

Here is a sample of some ComicLink.Com sales from July and August: Action #38 FN (mod. rest.) $1,900, #24 CGC VF+ 8.5 $2,550, #28 FN+ $850, #33 FN $550; All Star #51 VG $245; All Winners #11 CGC VF 8.0.

Amazing Spider-Man #1 VG/VG+ $1,400, #1 GD/VG $950, #2 CGC NM- 9.2 $5,000, #2 GD $215, #3 CGC VF/NM 9.0 $2,300, #3 GD $160, #3 AppVF (Slight P) $560, #4 CGC NM 9.4 $4,250, #4 CGC VF/NM 9.0 $2,200, 5 GD $90, #7 VG $130, #10 VG $135, #14 CGC NM- 9.2 $2,400, #14 FR/GD $75, #15 VG $95, #16 GD/VG $55, #17 CGC NM- 9.2 $1,100, #28 CGC NM 9.4 (Slight color touch) $800, #32 VF+ $95, #40 CGC NM- 9.2 $650, #52 VF+ $38, #101 CGC NM 9.4 $375, #121 CGC NM- 9.2 $225.

Avengers #4 CGC NM 9.4 $4,500, #9 FN/VF $85; Batman #3 CGC VF/NM 9.0, #6 CGC NM- 9.2, #9 CGC NM- 9.2, #11 CGC VF- 7.5... all for $35,000; Captain America #1 CGC VF- 7.5 (Cleaned and pressed only) $16,500, #58 CGC VF+ 8.5 $1,350, #100 CGC NM+ 9.6 $950; Daredevil #3 CGC VF+ 8.5 $295; Detective #31 CGC VG 4.0 $5,500, #100 CGC NM- 9.2 (Rockford) $2,300; Dr. Strange #169 CGC 9.4 $225.

Fantastic Four #3 GD+ $155, #11 CGC VF/NM 9.0 $1,100, #15 CGC VF/NM 9.0 $450, #15 VF+ $280, #25 CGC VF/NM 9.0 $650; Flash #73 FN $230, #100 VG+ $675; Hawkman #6 CGC NM 9.4 $250; Human Torch #3 FR+ (missing centerfold) $300; Iron Man #2 CGC NM+ 9.6 $385; Jackpot #9 GD/VG $125.

MAD #5 VG/FR $275; Magnus #2 VF/NM $110; Marvel Mystery #10 GD/VG $875; Millie the Model #1 CGC FN 6.0 $475; More Fun #119 & 121 both NM/MT 9.8 (MH) $1,750@; Mister Mystery #7 CGC VG- 3.5 $300; Shock Suspenstories #7 CGC NM+ 9.6 (Gaines) $1,750.

Tales of Suspense #30 VF $120; Weird Mysteries #4 CGC FN/VF 7.0 $1,400; Wonder Woman #39 FN $200; X Men #12 VF/NM $425, #19 CGC VF/NM 9.0 $250, #24 CGC NM+ 9.6 $575, #25 CGC NM 9.4 $300, #28 CGC VF/NM 9.0 $185, #30 CGC NM/MT 9.8 $675, #38 CGC NM- 9.2 $190, #97 CGC NM 9.4 $200, #99 VF $45, #101 VF/NM $65, #102 CGC NM 9.4 $100, #107 VF+ $25, #115 CGC NM 9.4 $90, #123 CGC NM 9.4 $80, #125 CGC NM+ 9.6 $140.

Original Art: X-Men #16 splash $8,750; Spider-Man #6 pg. 20 (restored and damaged) $2,800; Journey into Mystery #85 pg. 10 $3,000; Hulk #4 pg. 9 $3,200.

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I recently received a phone call from a person who thought I might be interested in buying some old comics that he was in the process of purchasing. He described them and told me that they were in incredible condition, gorgeous bright covers and the interior paper was bone white. Quite a few of them had war covers with Japanese and German stereotypes on them along with war bond covers. They were going to cost him quite a bit of money and since he was married with three kids he needed to sell them quickly. We had a meeting that evening and concluded a purchasing agreement. He guaranteed that I would be the happy owner of a nice batch of Golden Age books. I asked if the books had any marks or writing on them and he said there were some but couldn't remember exactly.

I proceeded to tell him about a special collection from the central valley of California. The Okajima collection consisted of approximately 2000+ books. The bulk of the collection was broken up at an estate sale quite a few years ago and no one really knows exactly what was there before or after the sale. Parts of the collection have been found in some of the local comic and antique shops and one large portion consisting of approximately 400-600 comics were purchased by Alan Bahr of Heroes Comics in Campbell, California.

The most amazing thing about this collection is the history behind them. During WWII Japanese-Americans were rounded up and placed in internment camps across the country. There was a large population of Japanese farmers in the Central Valley and one of the families was named Okajima. Young Okajima would purchase her comics at the local drugstore. Before the family was sent to a detainment camp they came to an agreement with the drugstore to hold back some comics for her. Similar to a "Pull and Hold" situation that we have for many retail comic book shoppers today and somewhat like the situation with the Larson Collection.

From what information I could gather, the store would save and *(Continued on pg 66)*

Be calm and take a breath!

As we endeavor to keep abreast of this heated and volatile market, one wonders if and when it may come to a screeching halt (and how bad is it going to hurt when it does). As much as we all love to see our hobby receive a huge boost now and again, these fluctuations do hurt when they come to a crashing end.

Perhaps a bit of reflection on what occurred in 1994 and 1996 (when the Silver and Gold market finished a spectacular run-up) might be a good idea and we can all learn from then past. Over time, we've seen that paying multiples of Guide for anything but Mile Highs has always proven a risky venture. But things change and perceptions shift... and every savvy collector knows of a few vastly under-valued books in the Guide. All this means that predicting the future of the present explosive market is tough... and caution combined with thoughtful, well researched investment is the watchword of the day.

Golden Age: During volatile times like these, having a knowledgeable friend, mentor, fellow collector, and/or trusted dealer in your corner is extremely important. The wisdom of someone who really knows their Golden Age can sure save you plenty of money and aggravation. In an area as vast and complicated as the Golden Age Market, one dealer cannot be everything to everyone, (especially with the internet looming large) and they know this. If they're trustworthy they'll always let you know if and how your wants can be had cheaper and better. If they can't (or won't)... buyer beware!

Golden Age Sales: Detective #88 GD $110, #89 FN $180; Dick Tracy #1 GD $90; Fight #35 GD $95; Human Torch #12 FR/GD $235, #13 VF/VF- $950; Kid Eternity #1 appVF $425; Miss Fury #1 GD $450; Modern #102 GD $65; Star Spangled #127 NM- $275; Sub-Mariner #3 AppFN $595.

Atom Age: An interesting anomaly is occurring in this part of marketplace... it appears as if grade does not always rule the day. On the contrary, it's scarcity that drives the majority of this market... and rightly so! It's almost a foregone conclusion that you'll pay higher multiples of GD to FN for certain issues and titles... a concept that some collectors have a hard time adjusting to but hard core Atom Age collectors have always known.

Atom Age Sales: Crimes by Women #7 VF $395; Four Color #228 FN $110; Jungle #78, VF/NM $165; Junior #13 VG $210; Man #12 VF $50; Nightmare #10 VG $145; Phantom Lady #13 GD $165, #17 FR $495; Pride of the Yankees FN $350.

Silver Age: We all have books we really love, and we're willing to pay dearly for them. But from what we've all seen over the past four months, the right questions are not being asked by collectors. The Guide makes note of roughly 8% of the warehouse (multiple copies) discoveries in our hobby. That fact doesn't necessary create a problem but for some warehouse finds/multiple copies (no matter how great their condition may be) creates a red flag for some hobbyists. For the benefit of all, I encourage collectors and dealers to write in to CBM and share their knowledge of any warehouse finds with all of fandom

Silver Age Sales: Captain America #100 CGC VF+ 8.5 $200; Daredevil #7 VF+ $550; Detective #236 FN $135; Fantastic Four #48 AppNM/NM+ $900; Flash #123 GD $175; Hawkman #4 CGC NM 9.4 $385; Hulk #103 NM+ $135; Iron Man #1 CGC NM+ 9.6 $1,650; Strange Tales #101 GD $78; Tales to Astonish #42 NM/NM+ $685, #43 NM $600; X-Men #1 GD $650; X-Men #45 9.6 $180.

Bronze Age: The sphere of collectibility in this market has expanded from the traditional 1970-73 material outward towards 1978 or so. Take a look at the prices for X-Men GS #1, #94, and Hulk #181 in high grade. Marvel Giant Size, DC $1 issues, and late 1970's DC war books are all in high demand. Collectors have even figured out that certain areas of this later 1970's material is relatively tougher to find due to lower print runs. Also this area is fraught with great Crossovers, tie-ins. Additionally, there is a surprising interest in such titles as Fat Albert, Micronauts, Superfriends, and Shazam.

Bronze Age Sales: All Out War #1 VF $9; Batman Family #1 VF/NM $22; Daredevil #81 NM+ $48; Green Lantern #90 NM $18; Happy Days #1 VG $18; Incredible Hulk #181 CGC VF/NM 9.0 $680; Journey Into Mystery #1 VF/NM $25; Marvel Spotlight #2 NM- $140; Marvel Spotlight #5 CGC NM- 9.2 $100; Micronauts King Size #1 NM $14; Shazam #1 NM+ $25; Unknown Soldier #205 VF $16; X-Men #100 variant VG $55.

In closing, some market reporters suggest that the dynamic has shifted in this hobby. With the expansion of eBay, new auction venues, and a 3rd party grading service it appears as if there is a new credibility being introduced to the hobby. More and more new blood is participating in the stampede to obtain the latest and the greatest... along with numerous attempts to make a quick buck. Yet it's still wise to "take a peek behind the curtain" before you invest your 401K money in multiple-of-Guide material just because it's encapsulated. Be calm, take a breath, get advice, and think hard before you jump on any bandwagon.

then ship the bulk of the comics to the camp where the family was living. They were wrapped in newspapers and were either sent to the camp or were held at the store. The markings on the books have a coding on them. One such example reads: 5-24-44 Okajima 3R, this was on Marvel Mystery #57. There are some issues that mention the barracks number on the cover. Some books were also purchased at the camp PX with their own particular markings. Most of the books I purchased are from 1944 (47 of 52) and are in amazing condition. The historical significance of these books and the fact they were purchased by a prisoner of war only adds to the historical significance of such a collection. A little girl persevered the trials, tribulations, and injustices of war and kept a steady course on her collecting of the entertainment medium we hold close and dear to our hearts today.

During the war, comic books were a tremendous propaganda device. More often than not, her race was depicted in a less-than-flattering light. It is amazing that she remained a diehard comic book collector during this ugly time in her life (and in history). What compelled her to continue collecting? Is she still alive today?

Those are questions that might not ever be answered. But I will continue to explore this fascinating chapter in our four color comic book history.

Okajima titles include: Action #72 FN+, #73 VF, #74 VF+; Batman #24 VF; Blue Beetle #31 VF+; Captain Aero #13 VF+; Captain America #39 VF+, #40 VF+, #41 VF+; Captain Marvel Jr. #20 VF+, #22 FN Captain Midnight #22 VF+; Crack #33 VF+; Detective #86 VF; Exciting #33 VF+; Feature #77 VF+; Fighting Yank #8 VF+; Flash #54 VF+; Marvel Mystery #52 VF+, #57 VF+; Master #48 FN+, #50 FN+, #53 VF; More Fun #97 FN+; Planet #31 VF+; Police #30 VF+/NM, #31 VF+/NM; Prize #43 VF; Sensation #30 VF+, #31 VF+/NM, #35 VF+; Shadow V4 #1 VF+, #2 VF+, #3 VF+, #7 VF+ (All V4); Sparkler #34 VF; Star Spangled #33 VF+; Startling #28 VF+; Super Magician V3 #1 VF+, #4 VF+; Superman #29 VF+/NM, #30 VF+; Target V5 #2 VF+; Whiz #55 VF+, #56 VF+; Wings #48 VF+/NM, #53 VF+/NM; Wonder Woman #9 VF+; and Wow #28 FN+.

Recent Sales: ASM #3 FN+ $750, #7 VF- $350, #10 VF $300. #11 FN+ $150, #12 VF $250, #13, VF $325, #15 VF+ $500; Batman #185, #186, #187, #188, #189, #190, #191, #192, all VF+ @ $40 #200 NM $200, #201 VF+ $25; Daredevil #1 VF $900, #7 VF+ $200; 80 Page Giant #2 VF+ $175, #3 VF+ $175, #6 VF+ $150, #8 VF+/NM $500, #12 VF+ $150.

Fantastic Four #48 NM- $775; Flash #25 FN+/VF $325; Great #1 (Novack) VF+/NM $300, #1 VF $200, #1 VF $200; Human Torch #20 FN/VF $550; Jo-Jo #12 VF- $250, #13 VF- $250, #16, #17 @ FN+ @$150; Impact #1 NM- $125; Leading #8 FN+ $225; Miss Fury #5 GD/VG $150, # 6 F+ $250; Mystery in Space #4 VF+/NM (Okajima copy) $ 550.

Planet #51, #52 @ VF+ (Okajima copies) 400 each; Rudolph 1962/63 (Rare) GD/VG 115; Rulah #17 VF (Manchester copy) $795; Silver Surfer #1 VF $325, #1 FN+ $150, #1 FN $100, #2 VF+ $100, #2 VF- $90, #3 VG+ $40, #4 VF+ $350, Sparkler #25 VF- (Okajima copy) 225 (in trade); Spectre #1 NM $100, #2-6 all NM @ $75; Star-Spangled #23 VF+/NM (San Francisco copy) $950; Strange Tales #67 VG 151, Ann. #1 VF $500, #2 VF- $200, Tarzan #2 VF+ (Okajima copy) $400; Three-D Dolly NM 150; Venus #2 GD/VG $96; X-men #5 VF+/NM 500, #9 NM $500, #94 NM- $600, Giant-size #1 NM $750, #1 VF+/NM $700; Z-o-Jet #1 FN+ 200; Zoot #11 F+ $425, #12 F+ $250, #14 F- 250 (All Manchester copies).

NAIMAN REPORT

Continued from page 62

there. Point out a rare one and everyone jumps on the bus. These collectors might not necessarily want the book, but find it the latest fashionable thing to do. (Didn't we see this with the War books a few years back?) But, I did find a long-time collector/dealer who was willing to share his experiences.

According to Jamie Newbold of SoCalComics, "We've had minor success with the sales of Dell westerns. Although they move less frequently than in previous years, I find that the best sellers are the television-based heroes... Roy Rogers, The Lone Ranger, and Wagon Train. Baby Boomers favor Jack Kirby as their favorite Western artist. Raymond Kuntsler interiors feature outstanding art but are (unfortunately) largely overlooked.

"Also, photo covers featuring classic movie heroes sell better than less recognizable actors. The actor on the cover, not the comic itself, dictates our western requests. A mid-grade James Garner Maverick cover or a Kirk Douglas Indian Fighter will draw more attention than a wonderful William George painted Zane Grey cover or a high-grade Gene Autry.

"I find that customers gravitate towards the copies that fall into their price range, not the best copy they can find. The buyers tend to be men in their late 40's or older... a generation that slips away from comics a little bit every year.

"I've looked for Dell western buyers by hunting through the comic want ads of various trade publications or on-line. The success rate for finding target buyers is very slim. The few collectors advertising Dell western want lists are generally attempting to fill small collections at wholesale buying prices. No surprise here!

Some titles are completely ignored and seem relegated to the "Back 40" of back issue bins of history. Little Beaver, Indian Chief and Buck Jones have long since joined the ranks of the dispossessed. In my buying trips to the comic book stores of Southern California and beyond, a pattern began to emerge. Common genres of comics with a 10-cent cover price tended to turn fast at each store on a regular basis. These comics consisted of the same titles over and over again. Low-grade Disneys, Charlton non-hero titles, funny animal comics and Dell westerns. Two things became clear. Dell westerns are near the bottom of collector interest and they are rather plentiful, common and still affordable. Ultimately, my impression is that there are more copies available than collectors. At least, for now."

Well, buckaroos that about winds it up for this issue. Time to mosey back to the chow wagon, grab some grub, then go hunker down in the bunk house with a chaw-o-tobacco, a bottle a red-eye, and a good read!

"In the next roundup, podnah... may yore spurs jingle and yore six-gun keep a-shootin straight!

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Recent shows have been phenomenal. Sales are strong in ALL categories. Chicago was a little weaker for expensive books. This was to be expected with San Diego being the week before the show. "Box" sales of DC and Marvel were very strong. I even sold a fair amount of Dell and Gold Key.

Key Sales at Chicago: Action #7 VG+ $9,000; Amazing Spider-Man #1 CGC VF/NM 9.0 $17,000; Avengers #1 VG- $300; Batman #1 GD+ $9,000, #16 GD/VG $600; Brave & Bold #61 NM+ (Northland) $250; Marvel Mystery #18 FN- $700; Phantom Lady #17 GD (am. restoration) $950; Sensation Comics #1 CGC 5.0 $6,200; X-Men #1 VG/FN $1,000.

GREG WHITE • COMICS AND COLLECTIBLES

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Hello from Central Florida. We have been off for a couple months and it is nice to get back to our normal schedule. Our summer travels once again brought us to the San Diego Con. Having set at this show for many years running, we could see that attendance in the Golden Age Silver Age pavilion was not as great as past years. Sales were average. The big hype was for those silly CGC graded books. As the old saying goes 'there's one born every minute.' 'Nuff said about that.

Demand continues for war time Golden Age. Unfortunately, those books don't come our way every day. Silver Age demand remains at a reasonable level with certain titles such as Batman, Amazing Spider-Man, and Showcase leading the way.

Silver Age 1955-1969: A number of collections came to us this summer. Funny how you can go for months with no collections coming in and then in a period of eight weeks more than a dozen groups have come our way. Runs of Flash, Showcase, Brave & Bold, and ASM have all come in. Our customer demand for Spider-Man continues to be strong. We are selling more lower and mid grade books too. The "NM-Only" collectors tend to be a pain as we seldom have what they want at the price they want to pay. (Most of our customers actually read and enjoy their books.)

Recent Sales: Amazing Spider-Man #19 VG $35, Batman #140 FN $30, Detective #284 FN $26, Flash #106 GD $60; X-Men #1 FR $300.

Golden Age 1933-1955: We purchased a strong run of Batman #51-100 and Superboy #1-50. Lower to mid-grade books that should sell well. Demand for Timelys continues. Most of that collection we bought in March is gone. War time covers (especially Hitler) are popular.

Recent Sales: All Winners #6 FN $800, Archie #7 GD $50, Batman #55 GD/VG $150, # 61 VG $200, Four Color #147 GD/VG $95, Superboy #29 FN $125.

Original Art & Toys: As always there was a great deal of overpriced art at San Diego. Some fine pieces that did not budge all weekend due to stratospheric pricing. Some pieces had that aggravating sign 'For Trade' hung on them. Why don't these guys just leave the art at home if they're really not interested in selling it.

I bought a large group of Win Mortimer newspaper strip art—very detailed and well done. I have always loved Mort's output of Golden Age DC covers. It will be interesting to see how it sells. We recently purchased a group of 1960's model kits unbuilt and in original boxes. The best of the bunch was the Aurora Goazilla kit.

Recent Sales: Baloo drawing $50; Flintstones cel $50, Matchbox Y-1 in box $25, Wolfman Aurora in box $250.

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It appears that Marvel has succeeded on the big screen! X-Men was a great movie with both movie viewers and comic fans. I for one hope that this is only the beginning for Marvel! They have a great stock of characters who would bring a lot to the big screen.

This could really help both the comic company and also create a bigger interest in comic books. We have been selling a lot of lower grade Silver Age books lately. Marvel keys and early issues below #30 have been selling well. It appears that many are buying them to complete runs at a time when some seem cheap compared to a Golden Age comic.

I have seen a great deal of interest in high grade vintage character collectibles this summer. We recently saw a Mickey Mouse Flex-N-Fun figure with mint box at auction. The toy is scarce, but the box is very rare. The estimate was $1,400 and when the smoke cleared from the bidding it sold for $3,900! If you have not picked up the 3rd edition of Hake's Price Guide to Character Toys you are missing some really great photos and information. This book is to collectibles what the Overstreet Guide is to comics. It has over 900 pages including everything from Disney to Vampirella.

The following are some recent sales we have seen on eBay: Iron Man #1 CGC Graded 9.8 NM/MT $2,425; Superman Acme Film Viewer MIB $781.50; Yellow Kid Bookmark $224.50.

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Sales on eBay continue to be brisk, with complete sell throughs on most Silver and Bronze books. The market continues to be strong on high grade Bronze, up to approximately 1977, with high grade books moving for multiples of Guide.

I think that eBay is showing more and more that the Guides seems to be significantly out of whack on non-mainstream books and the dynamic and elastic pricing model that comes out of eBay is going to eventually pressure the Guides to catch up to reality in this market.

Variant sales on eBay went through the roof. A Kid Colt #207 went for $255 and a Weird Wonder Tales #16 for $140. The market is heating up again for 30¢ issues. I feel are the toughest to find: Weird Wonder Tales #15, Mighty Marvel Western #45, Kid Colt #208 and #209, Ringo Kid #28, and Weird Wonder Tales #16. The toughest superhero books are Marvel Tales #68 and Iron Man #89.

Recent Sales: ASM #16 $18; Daredevil #105 NM $19; Gothic Romances #1 NM $150; Heavy Metal #1 NM/MT $21; Sgt. Fury #103 NM $30.

Silver Age: Daredevil #77 VF+ $26; FF #20 GD/VG $40; Tales of Suspense #39 PR $103; X-Men 23 VG $27.

On eBay, records are being set daily for high grade CGC books. Three grand for a Hulk 181!. Wow! CGC graded books: ASM #100 NM- 9.2 $242.50, #121 NM 9.4 $300, #129 NM- 9.2 $320, Batman #232 VF/NM 9.0 $162.50; Fantastic Four #91 NM 9.4 $73.54; Hulk #200 30¢ VF/NM 9.0 $100; JIM #83 NM- 9.2 $92; X-Men #100 NM 9.4 $255; X-Men #95 VF/NM 9.0 $91, #96 NM- 9.2 $150.

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Annie Fanny	Brooklyn Bum	Cowboys	Flintstones	Howdy Doody	Little Lulu	Prince Valiant	Sugar & Spike
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"As the pages Turn"

Continued from CBM #81

In our last exciting episode we met...
JIM- LONG TIME COMIC COLLECTOR WHO MAKES HIS LIVING AS A COMMERCIAL ARTIST...
SIDNEY JIM'S NEPHEW, COMIC FAN AND PART-TIME DEALER...
By Ron Kasman
JENNIE JIM'S WIFE WHO SUPPORTS HIM IN HIS HOBBY, EVEN THOUGH SHE FINDS HER HUSBAND'S ATTRACTION TO COMICS HARD TO UNDERSTAND...
AND...
Captain BILL
ENIGMATIC DEALER IN NOSTALGIA AND A NEWCOMER TO THE LOCAL COMICS SCENE. JIM HAS PURCHASED SOME SILVER AGE COMICS FROM THE MYSTERIOUS CAPTAIN BILL AT BARGAIN PRICES.
AFTER AN ARGUMENT WITH SIDNEY JIM REFUSES TO PASS ON THE ADDRESS OF BILL'S STORE.
NOW, TO CONCLUDE OUR STORY...
© 2000 R. KASMAN

ONE WEEK LATER, JIM RETURNED ON HIS OWN...
AND THEN, EACH FRIDAY AFTER WORK, JIM WOULD VISIT BILL AGAIN.
I GOT INTO THIS BUSINESS BECAUSE I LOVE OLD PAPER BUT NOW I CAN HARDLY BARE TO PART WITH IT.
HE COULDN'T BE TOO UPSET. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANOTHER CUSTOMER HERE.
BUT A BIKE CHAINED TO THE MAPLE IN FRONT WAS THE SIGNAL THAT BILL HAD ANOTHER VISITOR.
JIM, MEET HARRY.
HARRY COMES IN TWICE A WEEK TO POLISH THE BRASS, CHANGE THE DISPLAYS AND DUST THE SHELVES.
THESE SHELVES HAVEN'T BEEN DUSTED IN YEARS...
WHY ISN'T THAT KID IN SCHOOL?
IT'S EARLY AFTERNOON.
HARRY NEVER SAID A WORD TO JIM BUT WATCHED AND LISTENED TO HIM CLOSELY.
ONE DAY BILL PULLED OUT A STACK OF PENCILLED COMIC BOOK PAGES CREATED BY HIS YOUNG EMPLOYEE.
HARRY WANTS TO BE AN ARTIST!
THEY'RE GOOD FOR A KID STARTING OUT. THEY HAVE CHARM AND STYLE--THAT'S HARD TO COME BY.
BUT HE NEEDS TIME AND INSTRUCTION TO IMPROVE.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
I AM GOING TO PRINT THIS STORY IN WHIRLWIND TO GIVE HARRY SOME ENCOURAGEMENT.
THAT'S A LOT OF ENCOURAGEMENT. I THINK HE'S STILL YEARS AWAY FROM BEING PUBLISHABLE ON HIS OWN MERIT...
BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT...
I'M A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST... LET ME INK THE COVER.

THAT NIGHT...
I HAVEN'T PUT PENCIL TO BOARD IN YEARS. BUT THIS DRAWING NEEDS TO BE REFINED BEFORE I INK IT.
JIM IMPROVED THE DRAWING. HE BELIEVED HE WAS GIVING YOUNG HARRY A THRILL BUT HAD TO ADMIT THAT THE GREATER THRILL WAS HIS!

I ALMOST FORGOT HOW I LOVE TO DRAW...

I'LL LEAVE OUT MY INK AND PENS AND TRY TO GET IN AN HOUR OF DRAWING EVERY SUNDAY.

A PRICE STICKER IN THE CORNER AND WE'LL BE READY TO GO TO PRESS!

EXQUISITE!!
THAT'S THE ONLY WORD TO DESCRIBE IT!!
HE SOUNDS LIKE AN ART DIRECTOR.

THIS OFFICE IS THE HOME OF WHIRLWIND.
holy cow... I DON'T SEE A COMPUTER LET ALONE A SCANNER...
JUST LOOK AT THAT STACK OF MAIL.
I GUESS THIS KEEPS HIM BUSY WHEN THERE'S NO ONE IN THE STORE...
Hmmmm... MAYBE WHIRLWIND IS HIS PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME.

BILL UNLOCKED AN OLD OAK DOOR BEHIND HIS DESK AND ASKED JIM TO FOLLOW...
THIS MUST BE WHERE HE STORES HIS PERSONAL COLLECTION.
WELCOME TO OUR NERVE CENTRE.

ALONG THE WALLS WERE PAGES BY OLD-TIME COMIC BOOK GREATS...
ART BY HAL FOSTER AND JEFF JONES! A PERSONAL LETTER FROM JOE SHUSTER!
A PAINTING BY CARL BARKS HUNG IN AN UNPAINTED, PINE FRAME...
IS THAT AN ORIGINAL?
CARL GAVE IT TO ME A FEW YEARS BACK.
JIM EXAMINED A PAINTING WORTH MORE THAN THE BUILDING THAT HOUSED IT...
IT MUST BE A REPRODUCTION.
THE BRUSHSTROKES MUST HAVE BEEN PAINTED ON WITH CLEAR ACRYLIC.
JIM SAW A CONSPICUOUSLY PLACED PHOTO...
HE'S NEVER SPOKEN OF FAMILY.
COULD HE BE MARRIED TO THIS WOMAN?
THE MORE JIM GOT TO KNOW BILL, THE MORE INSCRUTABLE BILL BECAME. HE VOLUNTEERED NO INFORMATION AND, IF QUESTIONED, HIS ANSWERS DID NOTHING TO ILLUMINATE!
I'D HAVE TO SAY I'M BASICALLY AN ONTARIO MAN
I'VE WORKED AT THIS, THAT AND THE OTHER THING...
MY FAMILY? I GUESS IT ALL DEPENDS WHAT YOU MEAN BY FAMILY.
BILL FLATLY REFUSED EVEN THE MOST CASUAL SOCIAL INVITATION...
NO... I'M WORKING LATE TONIGHT... TOMORROW NIGHT TOO...
TRY ME NEXT MONTH.
HE NEVER SHOWED UP AT THE LOCAL TRADE SHOWS.
CAPTAIN BILL? NEVER HEARD OF HIM.
I WOULD REMEMBER A DEALER NAMED CAPTAIN!
JENNIE HAD HER OWN IDEAS...
WHAT'S TO WONDER ABOUT? HE SOUNDS A LOT LIKE SIDNEY AND SOME OF THE OTHER FANS WHO COME AROUND...
ONLY OLDER...
HE'S LONELY AND HE MISLEADS PEOPLE ABOUT THINGS HE CAN'T COME TO TERMS WITH...
THINGS LIKE FRIENDSHIP, FAMILY INFLUENCE, MONEY.
BUT EVEN ACCOUNTING FOR THE LIES, IT DOESN'T ADD UP.

JIM BOUGHT FOUR OR FIVE COMICS A WEEK FROM BILL AND BEGAN TO AMASS AN INTERESTING COLLECTION...
THEY'RE NOT WORTH MUCH BUT THEY MEAN A LOT TO ME.
go to sleep...
ONE FRIDAY HE TRIED TO GIVE BILL SOME ADVICE ON WHIRLWIND...
THIS IS THE FURNITURE CATALOGUE I DESIGN.
IF YOU VARY YOUR BORDERS LIKE THESE YOUR LAYOUT WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE.
BUT DESPITE HIS GOOD INTENTIONS...
YOUR CATALOGUE IS PRODUCED WITH A BIG BUDGET AND A BIG STAFF. MINE IS PRODUCED WITH A GLUE POT IN MY SPARE TIME.
JIM WOULD NOT MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AGAIN.
SIDNEY ENVIED JIM'S GROWING COLLECTION BUT KNEW HE WAS NOT TO DISCUSS WHERE JIM GOT THEM...
I KNOW A GUY WHO'LL PAY TWO HUNDRED FOR THAT DAREDEVIL!
SIDNEY, I PAID SIXTEEN DOLLARS FOR IT LAST WEEK.
YEAH, THE MONEY WOULD MAKE THE NEXT MORTGAGE PAYMENT EASIER BUT THIS COMIC IS MY PAST, MY MEMORIES...
I CAN'T PUT A PRICE ON THAT.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR MARKET VALUES...
I WON'T SELL!!
BUT JIM WONDERED IF HE SOUNDED LIKE SIDNEY WHEN HE SAID...
BILL, IF YOU EVER DECIDE TO SELL OUT YOUR BACK ISSUES, LET ME KNOW...
AND...
CAN I GIVE YOU MY WANT LIST?
AND...
THAT WAS PART OF THE FIRST INHUMANS STORY... CAN YOU GET ME THE OTHER ISSUES?
UNTIL BILL RESPONDED...
IT'S MY STOCK, MY STORE, AND I'LL DECIDE WHAT TO SELL OR NOT SELL!

NEXT FRIDAY, HARRY WAS MINDING THE STORE...
DID BILL LEAVE SOME OLD COMICS FOR ME?
NOPE, NOTHING HERE.
JIM DECIDED TO LOOK AROUND JUST THE SAME. HARRY SPOKE...
BY THE WAY... I NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO THANK YOU FOR INKING MY COVER.
MY PLEASURE! WHEN YOU'RE A TOP-FLIGHT PROFESSIONAL I'LL BE ABLE TO TELL EVERYBODY THAT I INKED YOUR WORK!
AS JIM PAYED FOR A FEW OLD CARDS HARRY ADDED...
YOU BUY COMICS TO COLLECT. MOST PEOPLE BUY COMICS TO RESELL. BILL WOULD RATHER DO BUSINESS WITH PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
THAT NIGHT JIM DISCUSSED THE BOY'S REMARK WITH JENNIE...
I STILL SAY THAT KID HAS A LOT OF NERVE.
I THINK HE'S JUST GLAD THAT YOU DON'T TREAT BILL'S MEMORABILIA LIKE PENNY STOCK...
PLEASE... GO TO SLEEP...
WHAT BUSINESS IS IT OF HIS WHAT I DO WITH THOSE COMICS AFTER I BUY THEM?
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE WHAT HE THINKS.
TAKE IT AS A COMPLIMENT.
STILL, THE COMMENT BOTHERED JIM THAT NIGHT AND FOR DAYS AFTER.
THE MONTHS ROLLED BY AND JIM RETURNED TO HIS DRAWING...
LOOK OUT FRAZETTA!
HE EVEN HAD A FEW CARTOONS PUBLISHED IN THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER...
LOOK OUT JACK DAVIS.
HE WASN'T SPENDING MUCH MONEY BUT HIS COMIC COLLECTION GREW LARGE...
HALF A DOZEN MORE AND I'LL NEED A SECOND BOX.
THEN ONE DAY IT HAPPENED! HE KNEW THAT IF HE JUST KEPT WAITING, BILL WOULD PULL IT OUT!!
WHAT'S UNDER HERE?

IT DOESN'T SMELL MUSTY! THE CORNERS ARE SQUARE! NO CREASES ON THE COVER -- IT EVEN SHINES A BIT!
FANTASTIC FOUR #1... THE ORIGINAL -- NOT THE FACSIMILE -- I'VE WANTED IT SINCE I WAS A KID...
Fantastic Four
AND IN THIS CONDITION IT'S GOT TO BE WORTH ABOUT TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS!!
HOW MUCH FOR THE FF #1
TWENTY-TWO FIFTY.
WHAT WAS THAT?
YOU HEARD ME...
TWENTY-TWO DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS.
JIM TRIED TO ACT NORMAL BUT HIS HEART WAS RACING AS HE APPROACHED THE DESK.
SO THAT'S AN UNCLE SCROOGE PEZ DISPENSER, THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND TWO SUB-MARINERS.
TWENTY-SIX SEVENTY-FIVE TOTAL.
I'VE BEEN AFTER THE F.F. SINCE I WAS THIRTEEN.
I'M GLAD YOU GOT IT.
JIM SKATED HOME TIRELESSLY, REACHING BEHIND AND INTO HIS BACKPACK REGULARLY TO MAKE SURE THAT HIS PRIZE WAS REALLY THERE.
JENNIE!! JENNIE YOU GOTTA SEE THIS!
NO ANSWER... SO...
SIDNEY... IT'S THE DEAL OF A LIFETIME! GET OVER HERE NOW!
THEN... I HAVEN'T SEEN ONE LIKE THIS FOR UNDER THREE G's SINCE I WAS IN GRADE TEN... WHAT DID YOU PAY?
JIM LIED...
FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS.
GOOD DEAL. YOU COULD SELL IT TOMORROW FOR EIGHT HUNDRED.

THATS ALL? I THINK I COULD GET A LOT MORE.
SURE, IF YOU FIND THE RIGHT BUYER! BUT GO TO A TRADE SHOW-- THE DEALERS ALL HAVE THEM. THERE'S A HUGE SUPPLY.
YOU'LL GET SEVEN HUNDRED, TOPS!
EVEN IN THIS CONDITION?
FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF...
NEXT DAY, SIDNEY SHOWED UP AT JIM'S WITH ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS--
50
50
JIM TOOK THE MONEY.
SIDNEY TOOK THE COMIC.
ONLY BEGUN TO FIGHT!
THAT EVENING, JIM HARDLY SPOKE TO JENNIE. HE DIDN'T EVEN MENTION SIDNEY'S VISIT...
YOU'RE NOT YOURSELF TONIGHT, DEAR.
YOU LOOK PALE.
I DON'T FEEL SO WELL. I'M GOING TO CALL IT A NIGHT.
BUT HE LAID AWAKE FOR HOURS BEFORE HE FELL INTO A TROUBLED SLEEP...
MORNING GAVE HIM NO RELIEF UNTIL HE DECIDED TO DO THE ONLY DECENT THING--
I'LL SPLIT THE MONEY WITH CAPTAIN BILL-- RIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE.

HE GOT IN HIS CAR AND THOUGHT ABOUT HOW HE'D HANDLE IT AS HE DROVE. JIM WAS SO DISTRACTED THAT HE ALMOST MISSED THE STREET.
I GOTTA CALM DOWN.
HIS TIRES SQUEALED AS HE MADE THE TURN. SECONDS LATER HE PARKED AT THE CURB AND JUMPED OUT...
WHERE'S THE STORE?
I'VE GOT THE RIGHT STREET. EVERYTHING LOOKS THE SAME BUT CAPTAIN BILL'S STORE IS GONE!
IT MUST'VE BURNED TO THE GROUND!! I HOPE BILL'S OKAY...
Bakery
N PREMISES
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT STORE?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG, SIR?
JIM RAN BACK OUTSIDE AND TOOK A CLOSER LOOK. NOT A BRICK OR BOARD REMAINED OF THE OLD BUILDING. THE FOUNDATION HAD BEEN FILLED IN. GRASS AND WILD FLOWERS COVERED THE LOT.
THE SOLE REMINDER OF THE PLACE HE HAD KNOWN WAS A MAPLE TREE -- BUT THIS ONE STRETCHED HIGH ABOVE THE BUILDINGS.
THE STORE THAT SOLD MEMORABILIA AND OLD PAPER AND COMICS!!
WHERE'S THE OLD MAN?
I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN. WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO GET THE MANAGER? MAYBE HE CAN HELP YOU.
HE LEANED WEAKLY AGAINST THE TREE. HE FELT IN HIS SHIRT POCKET. YES, THE CRISP BILLS WERE STILL THERE...
HE HEARD THE FAINT RINGING OF A BELL. HE LOOKED UP TO SEE HARRY RIDING HIS BICYCLE NEAR THE END OF THE STREET.
BEFORE JIM COULD CALL TO HIM HE TURNED THE CORNER AND WAS GONE.
The End

MARKETPLACE MAIL

(Continued from page 13)

Beetle #4 is the first drug issue? And then there's that wild drug story in that mid-'40's Shadow comic, and, well, I could ramble on for hours when it comes to my obsession, er, I mean helpless passion, oops, I meant mindless addiction, well, I guess it's hard to "sugar coat" that I am seriously hooked on comics (and CBM!).

Robert Letscher II, Arizona

Canadian MADness

Just a quick letter regarding the Canadian edition MAD #1 article in CBM #80 ("Canadian MADness"). Although the Canadian ECs had no dates, they were published contemporaneously with their American counterparts. Like most Canadian editions, they appeared 2-3 months after the American edition. We know this from date stamps and the recollection of original EC fan addicts. So the MAD #1, Canadian, probably appeared in early 1953. By the time the article suggests it appeared (1955 ???) American MAD Magazines were already being sold on newsstands.

I must agree with the ideas that all Canadian editions are scarce and high grade copies very rare. The paper that the covers were printed on is just the worst.

I do not know of any index of Canadian ECs. I encourage anyone with such a list too submit it for publication in CBM. The earliest I know is War Against Crime #7 and the latest, I think was a MAD #5, but I'm going by memory on that one.

Patrick Shaughnessy, Vancouver, Canada

Borrowed DC's ideas!

On the Marvel vs. DC topic… of course I vote DC, though I hate to disrespect Spider-Man. I really, really believe Marvel "borrowed" DC's ideas! Tarantula put a "calling card" on villains he caught like Spider-Man. Rick Jones and J. Jonah Jameson were swiped from Jimmy Olsen and Perry White, plain and simple. Mr. Fantastic was similar to Plastic Man and the Elongated Man. Quicksilver after the Flash etc., etc. 'nuff said.

Richard M. Brown, Michigan

Bronze Age Bargain!

Enjoyed your look back at the early Conan issues in your Letter From The Editor in CBM #81. I too was a real fan of the early Conan issues and have always felt them to be some of the best Bronze Age books ever published… especially "Devil Wings" which you mentioned too. What I can hardly believe is how inexpensive those Conan issues still Guide for. Overstreet shows issue #2 at only $19 in Fine and issues #4 and #5 at only $15 each in Fine! Incredibly, issue #6-9 are less than $10 each in Fine!!! And finally, #10 and 11 (the 25¢ Giants) are only $12 or so in Fine. This makes these book the biggest Bronze Age bargain I know of!

George Clemens, New York

My thanks to everyone who wrote in this time. Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. If you'd care to write, send communications to: Comic Book Marketplace, P.O. Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92118 or Email us at cbm@gemstonepub.com

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The Night Carl Barks First Came to Grips with His Fame

Carl Barks learned to accept fame, but he never understood it, never truly believed it. In October 1976 he attended his first comic convention, Newcon 11 in Boston. It was a relatively quiet affair and the Old Duck Man had a grand time. The following summer I attended the larger San Diego Comic Con with Carl and the scene was different. For one thing, he had been invited as guest of honor at an awards banquet Saturday night.

Barks had never addressed a large group before and he knew he was expected to appear on stage, to say a few words and to field questions from the floor. We had had some practice at Newcon, where Carl had shared the dais with John Stanley of *Little Lulu* fame, but the attendance was small and he wasn't expected to make a speech. Because of a hearing problem (his hearing aid, he complained, would sandwich words into a cacophonic jumble), he had me repeat questions to him from the audience. In San Diego the plan was the same, but he was psychologically unprepared for the number of people.

When the night of the awards arrived, we were there. Carl, I recall, was dressed spiffily for the occasion and was the last person scheduled. After dinner I was signaled to go up for the introduction. I should explain here that this was old hat for me, having done emcee work before. I was now in my mid-forties, had had a seventeen-year stint in radio behind me and felt comfortable before the crowd, even though the guests present were yesterday's who's-who of comic greats from Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster to Jack Kirby, Harvey Kurtzman and Charles Schulz.

Working the audience for effect, I downplayed my brief, initial comments, rattling off—in a clear, even monotone—a summation of accomplishments by "the man we have come here to honor," deliberately not mentioning Barks' name. I wrapped it up in less than a minute:

"Everyone I've met agrees to three things about the man we've come to honor tonight. First, they like his *writing*. Second, they like his *art*. And third, they like the *man*. (Pause) Ladies and gentlemen... CARL BARKS!" I shamelessly manipulated the audience because I knew it would be easy, that everyone agreed Carl Barks was such a towering genius his talents could not be duplicated.

Twenty years facing audiences didn't prepare me for the immediacy and intensity of the response from the folks at that banquet. Every person leaped to his feet in an instant, the applause deafening. It seemed to go on, and on, and on, as poor Carl stumbled up a few stairs and struggled to join me on stage. Such a glorious moment!—all eyes on the Duck Man, who was, at long last, getting the full glory of honor earned, honor deserved... and honor *unexpectedly received*, a once-in-a-lifetime event! Try as I may now, I don't recall a single question we fielded that night. If we had been up there an hour no one would have objected, but it couldn't have been more than fifteen minutes.

Carl *did* eventually learn to accept his fame, but that was the night the full brunt of it fell on doubting shoulders.

– Bruce Hamilton, August 28, 2000

Remembrances of the Old Duck Man

by Bruce Hamilton & Alan Dean Foster

A rare photo of Carl Barks taken in early August, 2000. Here in his last photo session, he is seen holding two pre-press proofs from a planned new series of lithographs to be reproduced from original watercolor paintings. PHOTO CREDIT: DR. GERRY TANK

Within weeks of two separate occurrences, I learned in the early 1980s that international best-selling author, Dr. Raymond Moody, and a man whose name I have, regrettably, forgotten, who, at the time, was the Vice Chancellor of Germany, were both Carl Barks fans! Each bought sets of the original, hard-cover *Carl Barks Library*, published in 30 volumes by Another Rainbow.

The night I had my first conversation with Dr. Moody he was up late in his home back east and for some reason I had lingered at our Arizona offices that were still in Scottsdale. Moody is best known for writing a book that documents the stories of hundreds of people's similar life-after-death experiences. The book, *Life After Life*, sold millions of copies and caused quite a stir when it was released.

Moody told me he had been a Carl Barks fan all his life, though when he was young—as most old-timers recount, *back when nobody got credit for nothing*—he didn't know who the "good duck artist" was. He called, he said, because he wanted to recount to me a vision! Considering the source, this should be interesting, I thought.

Moody described his youth—paralleling my own—when he scoured used magazine shops looking for Duck comics he'd missed or that had been published when he was too young to read. In the middle of one night he awoke, clear headed, but puzzled over a what he'd "seen," a crystal clear "vision" shaken out of a dream, perhaps, that had remained vivid to him, at that time, for over twenty years!

His saw himself on a Duck-scouting trek, but walking into a bookstore rather than his usual used magazine shop. He was amazed and stunned to see, right in front of him, prominently displayed, a huge, encyclopedia-size library in which were printed all the Donald Duck and Uncle Scrooge stories he'd ever read or missed, all by the "good Duck artist," whoever he was. "When I saw a picture of the *Carl Barks Library*, I immediately recognized my vision… what I'd 'seen' in the middle of the night twenty years ago," he said. "This is a story I thought you should hear."

We communicated a few times after that, but I gradually lost track of Dr. Moody. If he's alive and well, he may have heard of the death of Carl Barks and is saddened, as we all are. In any case, Doctor, wherever you are, thank you again for sharing your vision with us!

—BRUCE HAMILTON

My father was never much of a teacher. I had an uncle who wasn't too bad. But my real teacher, my mentor, before I was old enough to understand the true meaning of "teacher", was Carl Barks. Before I knew who he was, before I knew what he did, I knew what he stood for.

When I was trying to understand what "grown-up" meant, there was Carl Barks. When I wanted to get on a plane, or a boat, and see the world, but couldn't because I was only seven, there was Carl Barks. When I read the news and wondered sometimes if good would triumph over evil, there was Carl Barks. Whenever I needed a laugh, or a big dose of sense-of-wonder, there was Carl Barks.

Carl Barks didn't write comic books. Carl Barks wrote compact novels. Carl Barks did not draw comic books. Carl Barks drew life. With feathers, maybe, and duckbills, but life nonetheless. Oftentimes, life that our own parents could not or would not explain to us. Thanks to Carl Barks, from a very early age I had no fear of growing old, because while Uncle Scrooge aged, he never stopped being tougher than the toughies or sharper than the sharpies. I figured if a short, old, cane-wielding, glasses-wearing misery of a duck could handle old age, I could, too. It's a gift I find hard to put into words.

Now Carl Barks is gone. Looking, as always, for another rainbow. I'm sure he'll find it.

Good-bye, Unca' Carl.

—ALAN DEAN FOSTER

Oh, how cute!" exclaimed my wife, when she and I visited the Temecula, California trailer home of Carl and Margaret "Gare" Barks in the middle of a mild 1975 winter—it would have been late January—and we were standing in front of Carl Barks' latest 10" x 8" miniature oil painting, about two thirds complete.

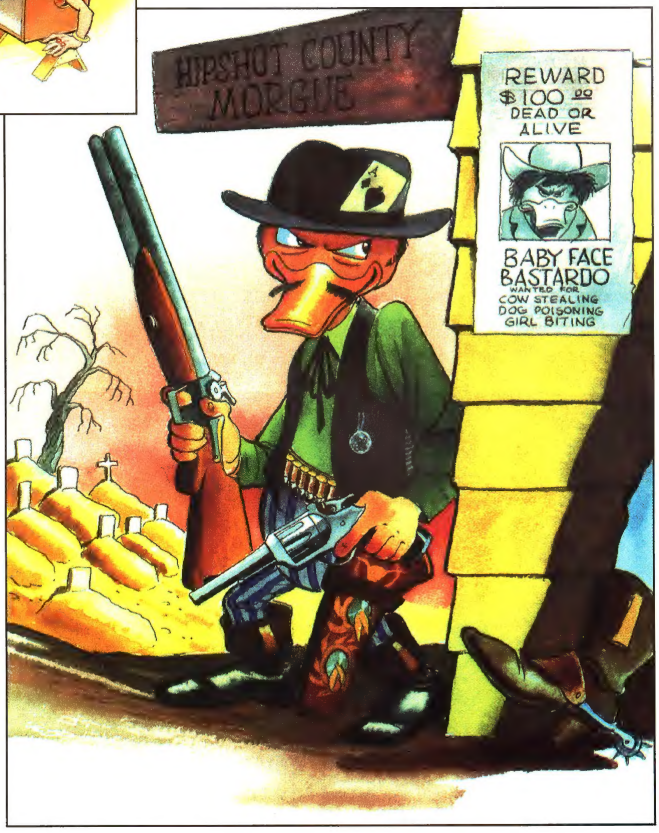
It was *Dude for a Day*, his 93rd of 122 paintings done between 1971 and 1976, destined to be sold or auctioned in the collector's marketplace, most likely on the summer convention circuit. *Dude* was small, but it packed a wallop: one unnamed nephew is polishing his uncle's foot with orange shoe polish, described by Barbara Boatner in *The Fine Art of Walt Disney's Donald Duck by Carl Barks*: "A dapper dude from Duckburg, Donald has the polishing touches put to his finery. Doubtless he is on his way to see Daisy…. This is

Man." And it was signed, "Carl Barks." It was a touching gift, considering he must have spent a full week of his life working on it.

But the story doesn't end there. The inscription was mystifyingly lettered on a peelable sticker, explained away on a note by Carl saying he did it to enable us to be able to peel the sticker off so the painting wouldn't be devalued if we ever decided to sell it.

We do still have the painting, but would we ever sell it? Maybe. If I were immobilized in an iron lung.

—BRUCE HAMILTON



Two classic genres get the Carl Barks treatment... "Blackstone, the Great" (above) and "Luke Short, Undertaker's Friend" (right).

Donald, tall, duck and handsome, master of his fate and captain of his soul—for the moment.'

It was pure Barks, with humor that was reminiscent of his comic book days. I echoed my wife's praise.

About three months later our daughter, Summer, was about to graduate from high school, so the Barkses were sent an invitation. Since they occasionally visited us in Scottsdale, we hoped they would come. Unfortunately, there was some reason why they couldn't. The week before graduation their regrets arrived in the mail, along with a small package. Inside was *Dude for a Day*! On the back was an explanatory inscription, "For Bruce, Helen and Summer—for all the many favors done for the Old Duck

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